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Everybody's
MAGAZINE

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December 1922

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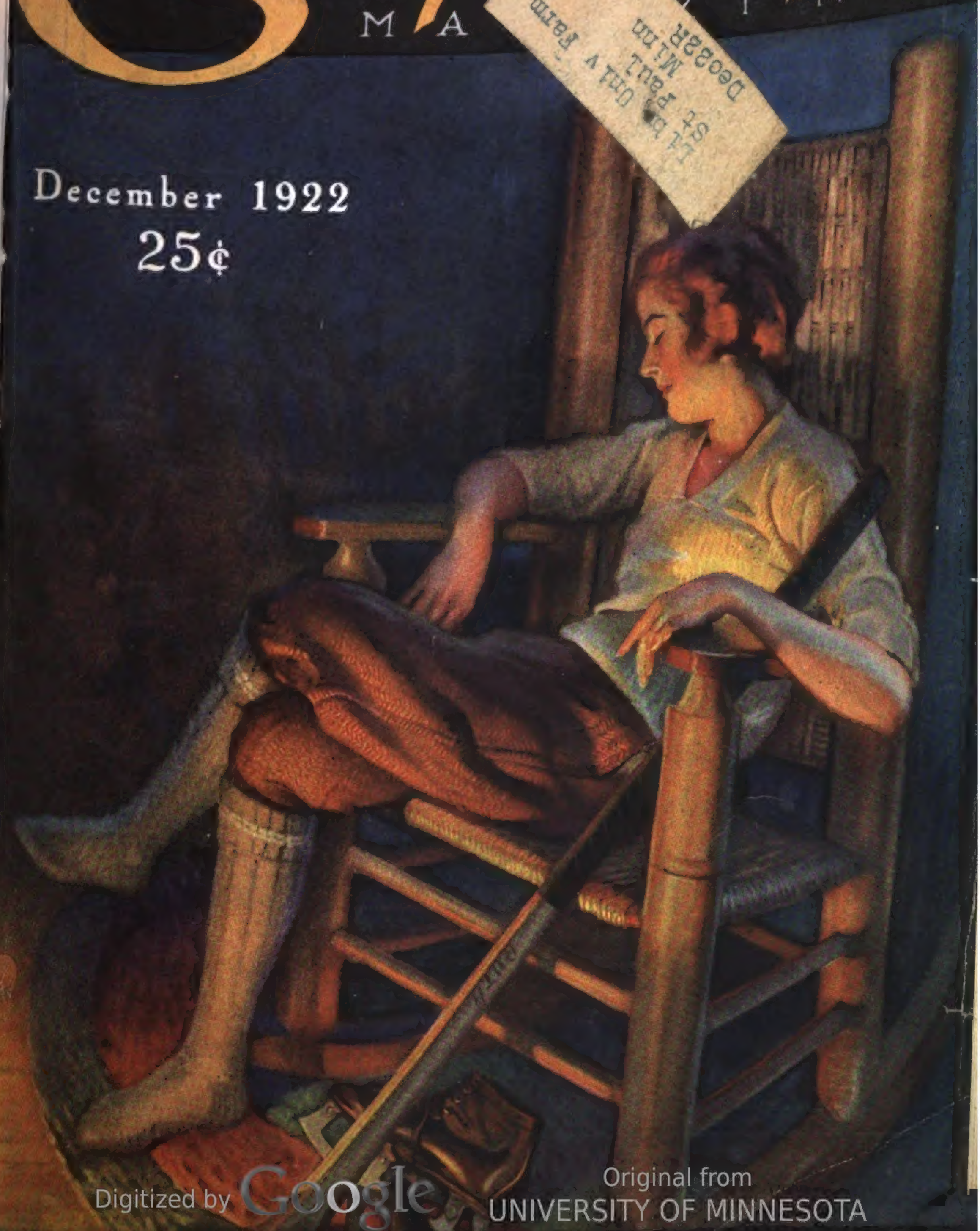

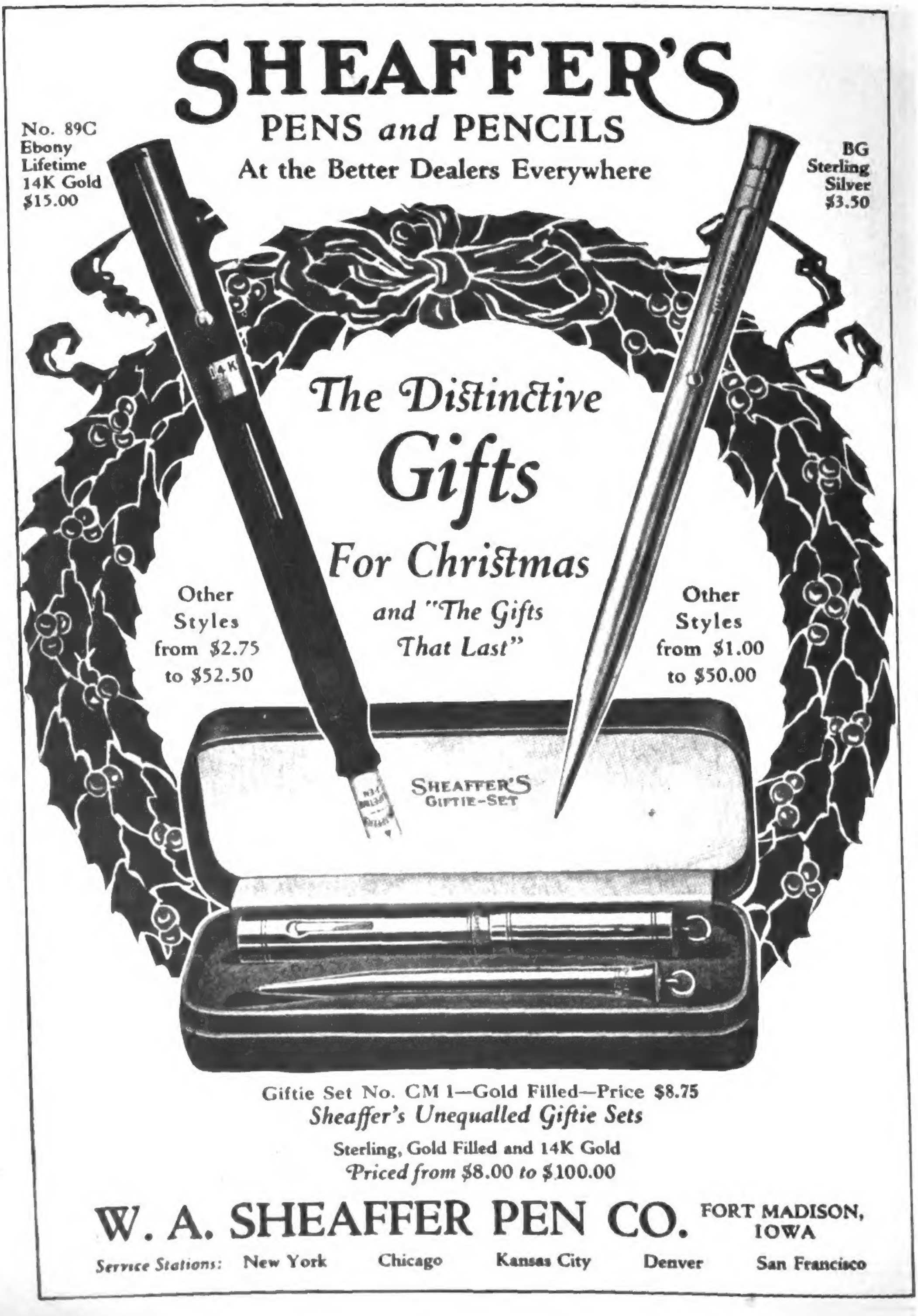

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An Amazingly Easy Way to Earn $10,000 a Year

Let Me Show You How FREE

To the average man the $10,000-a-year job is only a dream. Yet today there are a surprising number of men earning five-figure salaries who were merely dreaming of them a short while ago. The secret of their success should prove a startling revelation to every ambitious man who has ever aspired to get into the $10,000-a-year class.

There is nothing "different" about the man whose salary runs into five figures. He is made of the same stuff as you and I. For example, take J. P. Overstreet, of Dallas, Texas. A few short years ago he was a police officer earning less than $1,000 a year. Today his earnings are in excess of $1,000 a month—more than $12,000 a year. C. W. Campbell, Greensburg, Pa., was formerly a railroad employe on a small salary—last month his earnings were $1,562.

Read These Amazing Stories of Success

Earned $524 in Two Weeks

I had never earned more than $60 a month. Last week I cleared $306 and this week $218. You have done wonders for me.—Geo. W. Kearns, Oklahoma City, Okla.

I Now Earn as High as $100 a Day

I took your course two years ago. Was earning $15 a week clerking. Am now selling many of the largest firms in the U. S. I have earned more than $100 in a day. You secured me my position. Our Sales Manager is a graduate of yours.—J. L. De Bonis, Chicago, Ill.

Earns $1,562 in Thirty Days

My earnings for the past thirty days are $1,562.00, and I won Second Prize in March, although I only worked two weeks during that month.—C. W. Campbell, Greensburg, Pa.

Earned $1,800 in Six Weeks

My earnings for March were over $1,000 and over $1,800 for the last six weeks, while last week my earnings were $356.00. I travel eleven months out of the year, working 5 days each week. The N. S. T. A. dug me out of a rut where I was earning less than $1,000 a year and showed me how to make a success.—J. P. Overstreet, Dallas, Texas.

Why Don't YOU Get into the Selling Field?

Mr. Overstreet, Mr. Campbell, and the others whose letters you see on this page are all successful salesmen. They have stepped into the $10,000-a-year class—and they never sold goods before! It is hard to believe that such big success could come so quickly and easily. Yet it was all amazingly simple! Ask them the secret of their sudden success. They will tell you they owe it to the National Salesmens Training Association. This is an organization of top-notch salesmen and sales managers, formed expressly for the purpose of training men to sell and helping them to good selling positions. It has taken hundreds of men from all walks of life and made them Master Salesmen—it has lifted them out of the rut and shown them the way to magnificent earnings, to fascinating careers and big selling positions.

We Train You and Help You Land a Job

What these men have done, you can do! In your spare time at home you can easily master the secrets of selling that make Star Salesmen. Whatever your experience has been—whatever you may be doing now—whether or not you think you can sell—just answer this question: Are you ambitious to earn $10,000 a year? Then send me your name quick! I will prove to you without cost or obligation that you can easily become a Star Salesman. I will show you how the Salesmanship Training and Free Employment Service of the N. S. T. A. will help **you** to wonderful success in Selling.

Free Book on Salesmanship

Just mail the coupon or write for our great illustrated book, "Modern Salesmanship," which we will send you Free. Let us prove to you that regardless of what you are doing now you can quickly become a Star Salesman. Let us show you how you, too, can step into the ranks of the big money makers of business. See how easily you can learn this fascinating, big-pay profession at home in your spare time. Learn what we have done for others and what we stand ready to do for you. Don't put it off until tomorrow—write us today. Mail the coupon at once.

National Salesmens Training Association
Dept. 74-W, Chicago, Ill., U. S. A.

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Dept. 74-W, Chicago Ill., U. S. A.

Please send me, without any obligation on my part, your free book, "Modern Salesmanship," and full information about the N. S. T. A. system of Salesmanship Training and Employment Service. Also a list showing lines of business with openings for salesmen.

Name ....
Street ....
City .... State ....
Age .... Occupation ....

EVERYBODY'S
December 1922

Published monthly by The Ridgway Company at Spring and Macdougal Sts., New York City. Yearly subscription $2.50 in advance; single copy 25 cents. Entered as second-class matter Aug. 16, 1899, at the Post-Office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. Entered as second-class matter at the Post-Office Department, Ottawa, Canada.

Volume XLVII
Number 6

The Christmas Gift that's different

ORIGINAL, useful and thoughtful—an Evertite Bag or Purse. They cannot open accidently—the patented fastening insures absolute safety. Yet, they are just as convenient as they are safe. To open, or close, simply draw the catch to the opposite side.

Vanity Hand Bag—Genuine bright pin seal. Black; moire silk lined; contains mirror. Three pockets, one with Evertite fastening; silk cord handle. Size 7"x3¼". 9171. $6.00. (At right.)

Ladies' Hand Bag—Beautiful Brazilian grain; fluffed lambskin. Brown or gray; moire lined; contains mirror. Silk cord handle. Size 8" x 8½" 9378. $3.75. (At left.)

Collar Case—Calf-finished leather. Black or brown; moire lined. 7" diameter, 3¼" deep, with Evertite fastening. 9275. $5.00. (Below.) Oblong shape for soft collars, $6.00.

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Also Coin Bag 5½"x6". 545. $1.50.

Ladies' Hand Bag—Caribou grain Persians. Black and brown; moire silk lined; pocket containing mirror. Three pockets, one with Evertite fastening. Size 8" x 5". 9176. $5.50. (Above.)

If your dealer cannot supply you, send us his name and upon receipt of price we will send you, prepaid, any article listed above.

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Dept. 10 **Gloversville, N. Y.**

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Evertite
BAGS AND PURSES

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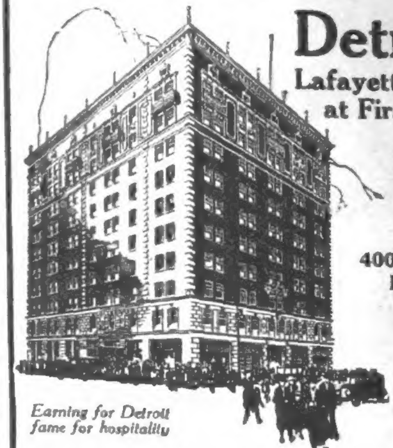

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Not one of these jobs is beyond your reach
Which one do you want?

The kind of a fellow who gets ahead today—and holds one of these high positions is the fellow with *training.* Nowadays employers can find men with training very easily—because colleges are graduating them pretty fast—so the fellow who had to leave school early is handicapped unless he gets training during his idle hours.

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Mail This Coupon Today

Send us your name and address on the coupon. Just write underneath, in the coupon what job you want to hold. We'll tell you how you can get just the training you need right in your own home.

You'll be under no obligation—and the information you will get will do you a great deal of good. Let us help you. We are at your service—and all you need to do is to send this coupon with your name and address. Do it now—for your own sake and the man you want to be.

American School Dept. G-94 **Chicago, U. S. A.**

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are actually demanded year after year by more people than any other shoe in the world

BECAUSE: For style, material and workmanship they are unequaled.

Protection against unreasonable profits is guaranteed by the price stamped on every pair.

Years of satisfactory service have given them confidence in the shoes and in the protection afforded by the W. L. Douglas Trade Mark.

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COMPARE our $7.00 and $8.00 shoes with any $10.00 or $12.00 shoes made.

If not for sale in your vicinity, send for free catalog.

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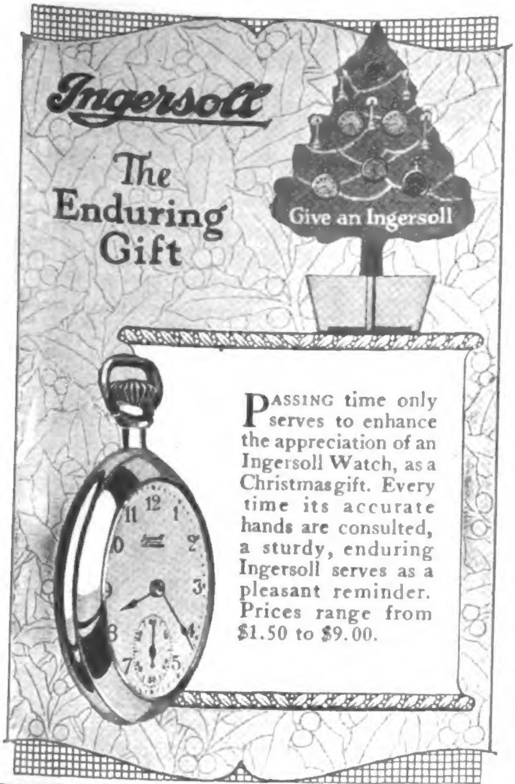

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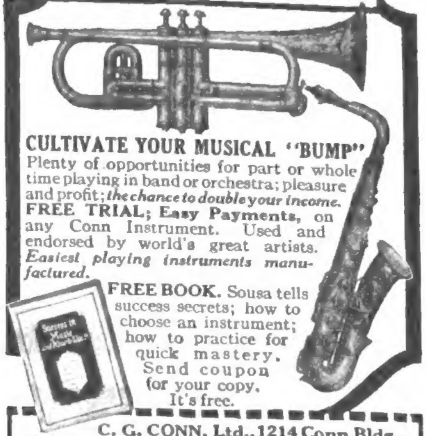

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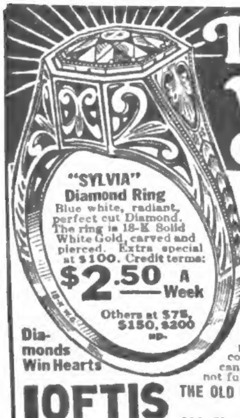

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Easy to Learn in 3 Weeks

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FREE--a special tempered Musical Saw, Saw Bow, Soft Hammer free with Course of Instruction. This Course is short, simple and easy. Only three lessons, one each week--no months of tedious practice.

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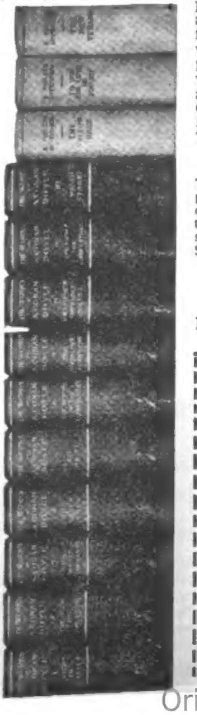

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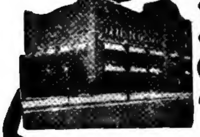

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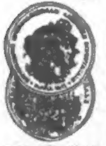

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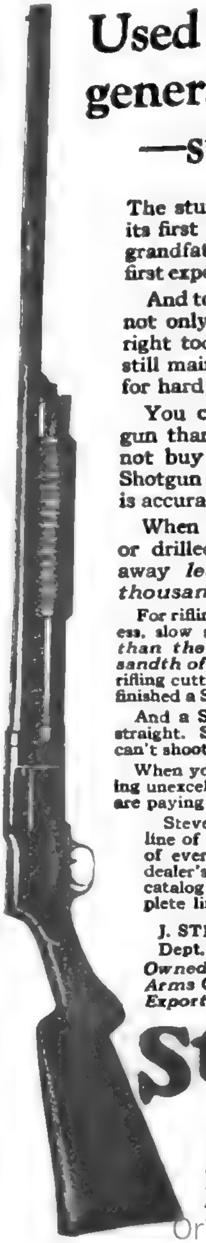

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HOW I SAVED MY HAIR!

THE TRAGEDY OF BALDNESS

BY ALBERT WOODRUFF

IT WASN'T until my business associates commenced to notice that I was rapidly becoming bald and gray that I worried. For, while I was just as full of pep and vim as I had ever been, while my business judgment was just as keen as ever, yet I worried for fear my associates might think of me as heading toward the "has been" class. I decided to save my hair—if it could be saved.

I became a slave to hair tonics. If a tonic was new I bought it on sight. I tried every kind of shampoo that I heard of. I was a victim of the barber's wiles. The money I spent—and all to no purpose. My hair continued to come out just as fast as it ever did before I had tried to stop it. Every time I combed my hair it told the story.

"Only a short while ago my hair was falling out by combfuls, yet today I have fine, thick hair, with not the slightest trace of baldness or dandruff."

How I Prevented Baldness

One day I read a very interesting advertisement by the celebrated Physical Culturist, Bernarr Macfadden. Now it so happened that I had seen Mr. Macfadden several times and knew that he himself had wonderful thick hair. Naturally I was interested—although it was news to me that Mr. Macfadden had made a study of the hair and had written a book on the subject, entitled "*Hair Culture.*"

I made up my mind right then that since Mr. Macfadden had written the book it was sure to be very practical—and the fact that so many had been sold clearly proved to me that the treatise must be filling a popular demand.

So I just jotted my name and address down on the coupon and returned it. When I received the book on five days' Free examination I immediately read it very carefully and that very same night I started to follow the few simple rules. I must confess that within a very short time I noticed a decided improvement in the growth of my hair—it became thicker and more glossy. Then dandruff disappeared. Today, after following the rules laid down in this new method, I have just as fine a head of thick hair as you would see on any man—even a young man of eighteen or twenty has no thicker or glossier hair than mine. In fact, many haven't anywhere near such fine hair. The grayness has all disappeared and my hair has the glowing color of youth. My wife and children also adopted the rules which we discovered in Mr. Macfadden's treatise entitled "*Hair Culture*" and their hair is the admiration of all their friends. If you will examine the book I am quite sure that you will agree with me that it is one of the most valuable—if not the most valuable—and instructive book ever written on Hair Culture.

ALBERT WOODRUFF.

Women! Keep Your Hair Youthful

If your hair is graying prematurely you have every reason to hope that it can be stopped and that much can be done toward restoring it to its original youthful and becoming color.

If it is losing its luxuriant quality and glossy sheen the few simple rules taught by Bernarr Macfadden in his new book HAIR CULTURE will enable you to bring about an almost unbelievable improvement. Why spend time and money at the hair dresser's when you can give your hair a better home treatment in only a few minutes a day by this new method? You can easily have hair that is wonderfully silky in texture and your scalp can be cleansed of every trace of dandruff or scurf.

Bernarr Macfadden's Secrets of Hair Culture

These chapter titles will give you an idea of the scope and value of this remarkable book.

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How to care for baby's scalp
Dandruff
Baldness
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Facts every one should know about the hair
Facts about soaps and shampoos
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Falling Hair
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A street in Mombasa, Africa, filled with ivory carriers. The huge tusks whic they are handling are for shipment to the United States

Hupmobile

Advertising section continued in rear of book

Everybody's

NUMBER SIX DECEMBER, 1922 VOLUME XLVII

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Illustrated with photographs

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This great observer of animal life is here at his best

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JANUARY EVERYBODY'S

Three Serials, a Complete Novel, Seven Short Stories and a Play

See Announcement, page 139

Statement of the ownership, management, circulation, etc., required by the Act of Congress of August 24, 1912 of EVERYBODY'S MAGAZINE, published monthly at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1922. State of New York. County of New York, ss. Before me a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared JAMES F. BIRMINGHAM, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Business Manager of EVERYBODY'S MAGAZINE, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (and if a daily paper, the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit: 1. That the names and address of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher: THE RIDGWAY COMPANY, a corporation, Spring and Macdougal Streets, New York City. Editor, SEWELL HAGGARD, 223 Spring Street, New York City. Managing Editor, none. Business Manager, JAMES F. BIRMINGHAM, 223 Spring Street, New York City. 2. That the owners are: *Owner:* THE RIDGWAY COMPANY, a Corporation, Spring and Macdougal Streets, New York City. *Stockholders:* FEDERAL PUBLISHING COMPANY, a corporation, 15 Exchange Place, Jersey City, N. J., Stockholder of FEDERAL PUBLISHING COMPANY; THE BUTTERICK COMPANY, a corporation, Spring and Macdougal Streets, New York City. Stockholders of BUTTERICK COMPANY: GEORGE B. BLACK, 812 Lincoln Avenue, Mendota, Ill. C. D. BARNEY & Co., 15 Broad Street, New York City. JOHN M. DONINGTON, 37 Wall Street, New York City. CHARLES A. EDWARDS, 45 Wall Street, New York City. W. H. GELSHENEN, 100 William Street, New York City. S. R. LATSHAW, Butterick Building, New York City. J. H. OLIPHANT & Co., 61 Broadway, New York City. LAURA J. O'LOUGLIN, 514 West 114th Street, New York City. MRS. ARETHUSA POND, 839½ South Vermont Avenue, Los Angeles, Calif. ABBY L. WILDER, 70 East 77th Street, New York City. B. F. WILDER, Butterick Building, New York City. C. D. WILDER, Butterick Building, New York City. G. W. WILDER, Butterick Building, New York City. 3. *That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent. or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are:* none. 4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of bona-fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him. JAMES F. BIRMINGHAM, Business Manager. Sworn to and subscribed before me this 30th day of September, 1922. (Seal.) CECIL L. WAHL, Notary Public, Kings County, certificate filed New York County. (*My commission expires March* 30, 1924.) Form 3526.—Ed. 1916.

Everybody's

NUMBER SIX DECEMBER, 1922 VOLUME XLVII

Rugged Living, Rugged Thinking

ONE finds the old simplicities of life amid the aged people who long years ago crossed the prairie in wagons or pioneered face to face with the ever-present old man Death.

I think that simple life of rugged living led to a simple train of rugged thinking. When one is near to the eternal, one ceases to think too strongly of the present thing, realizing that the challenge rings to the spirit and not to the body alone.

Men stop me on the street of my little home town to say to me,

"How is business?"

"Fine!" say I. "The berries upon my mulberry tree are ripe, and the mocking-bird and golden oriole are in the branches all day long."

They look at me perplexedly, thinking me deranged.

I laugh loud, which but serves further to perplex them. They are thinking of dollars, and I am thinking of song. Not all the dollars that the Chamber of Commerce will ever set eyes upon in its most fanciful imaginings of wealth will make the song of the mocking-bird a particle sweeter.

BILL ADAMS.

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The dancing team of Minnie and Martin is famous both in professional and in social circles.

Street's End

Sometimes, Before You Arrive, You Think Success Means Everything. Then, When You Have Arrived, Your Heart Tells You That There's Something Missing. What Is It?

By Dana Burnet

Illustrations by Harry Fisk

THERE was a figure, he noticed, ahead of him as he came out of the shadow of the houses into the open park at the street's end. It walked before him, vaguely discernible, moving with a directness that gave purpose to its progress. It troubled him. There was mockery in the thought that its purpose might duplicate his own.

The night was warm—an April night—and a fine mist blurred the lights of the houses that stood grouped, with a foreign flavor of roof-line, about the little park. The houses were new and elegant, for there had been recently an exodus of the wealthy to the river-front. Martin didn't know that, but he was aware of a difference in the houses. They reminded him of Paris. He remembered the march up the Champs Elysées in the drizzling rain between rows of buildings something like these. Paris! He laughed.

Beyond the park was a stone terrace with broad steps leading down almost to the river's edge. He stood at the top and looked about for the figure that had preceded him. It was nowhere to be seen. He began to walk down toward the black water.

Then he saw her, sitting huddled on the bottom step, her body bent over her knees. A woman—a girl. A childish figure, with a weight on her shoulders pressing her down.

She heard his step behind her and gave a start and a cry, shrinking away from him. Martin stood still.

"It's all right; I ain't no bull."

Her voice came in a quick whisper.

"Whatcha want?"

"Nothin'," said Martin.

"Whatcha doin' here?"

"Nothin'."

Then the girl's whisper, edged with a sardonic humor:

"Neither 'm I."

She leaned back on one arm, her body slightly twisted, her face turned up toward him. It was a sharp, triangular face, white, with two dark spots for eyes.

"Outa luck, huh?" she queried.

"I'll say so!"

Her glance took him in from head to foot, made note of a shrunken army jacket.

"Soldier?"

"Yeah. Was."

"No work?" Martin shook his head.

"Sit down. Make yourself at home."

Her pert humor, with its ironic undertone, drew from him a sheepish laugh. He sat down beside her on the stone step.

"I see you walkin' ahead of me. Couldn't tell what you was, but I had a hunch where you was goin'."

"Yeah."

"You outa luck, too?"

"You said it, bo!"

"What was you goin' to do?"

The girl studied his profile, dimly

revealed in the mist. At the bottom of the steps, on either side of them, two wrought-iron lamps threw down a pale glow. He repeated his question.

"Jump in," she said shortly.

"Takes nerve, don't it?" said Martin, after a pause.

"Don' know. I ain't tried it yet."

"Sure it takes nerve. I been here before. I mean—to the river."

"And you couldn' do it?"

"No. I got thinkin'——"

"Whatcha think about?"

"Nothin'. Well—I mean—I thought I might as well hang on—a while longer."

"Not for me!" exclaimed the girl.

"You had it pretty tough, huh?"

"Rotten."

"Well, say—I mean—le's go—together."

This time she looked at him frankly.

"You scared?"

"Yeah."

"And you a soldier! Maybe you didn' get across, though?"

"Sure I did!" said Martin.

"France?"

"Yeah. And Russia. It was hell there. I got hit with a piece of shrapnel. In the hospital six months."

"Was you scared then?"

"Naw! I didn' give a damn what happened. So far away from home, and all."

"You got a home?"

"Did have."

"Married?"

"Naw. Just my mother and me."

"What happened to her?"

"Died."

"While you was over there?"

"Yeah."

"Gee!"

NEITHER spoke for some time. Then, "What's your name?" he asked.

"Minnie. What's yours?"

"Martin."

The girl gave a fluttering laugh.

"Funny—ain't it?—our bein' here."

"Yeah; it's funny, all right."

"Whadda y' s'pose—" She paused, groping for speech. "Whadda you s'pose it's all about?"

"God! I don' know."

"It's the bunk, ain't it?"

"Sure—it's the bunk, all right. Fightin' them Russians, and the botches and all, and gettin' the bum's rush when you get home."

"Yeah; it's worse since the war. But it always was a punk game. Makes you sore—don't it?—when you walk up the Avenoo on an empty stomach and see all the guys and dames ridin' round in fancy buzz-wagons? Gee! I could live the rest of my life on what they spend for gas."

"I used to feel that way, too. But, God, it ain't their fault! It's just luck."

"Yeah! That's right. Offen I used to think I'd like to throw a brick through some of them plate-glass windows on the Avenoo, but then I thought s'pose I hit some nut that ain't got it comin' to him."

"Sure! You can't tell. Some of them birds is all right, and you don' do no good throwin' bricks. I met a guy in Russia—he was one of them Bolsheviki—you know. He was in the hospital with me, and he could talk American. He taught me a lot of them Russian songs and dances. That was after we was up and around. Well, he was tryin' to tell me I should start a revolution over here when I got home; but I says, 'Hell,' I says, 'we hadda revolution once,' I says, 'and now look,' I says, 'you can't even get a glass of lager.' Kinda kiddin' him—see? Well, he was a funny bird. He never said nothin' for three days—yeah, three days. And then he says to me, 'Martin,' he says, 'you're right,' he says. 'We hadda do what we done in Russia because it was the only thing to do. I believe in Bolshevism,' he says, 'because it's all for the workin'man and all, but what the world needs,' he says, 'ain't new forms of gov'-ment. It's a new state of mind.' Now, whadda you make of that?"

"Gee! I don't know."

"I figgered it out this way: What he meant was if everybody'd quit tryin' to grab off everything for himself and try to act—you know—more on the level, and kinder——"

Martin stopped, overcome, perhaps, by the futility of attempting even a statement of the world's need.

"But you can't blame 'em," he added. "If I hadda chance, wouldn' I grab off all I could for myself? I'll say I would!"

"So would I," said the girl. "You just betcha!"

Silence.

"Well," said Martin, "guess we better be shovin' off."

"Yeah."

But they did not move. It was very still.

"Say—Minnie——"

"What?"

"If you had a chance, what'd you rather have than anything else?"

"Who—me? I don' know. What's the use——"

"Well, you know—just kiddin'."

"I'd like to have one of them big cars, with plush seats, and a place to go to—an apartment. With nice curtains, and a sofa with cushions on it—you know, like they have in the movies——"

"Sure!" said Martin sympathetically.

"What'd you like to have—if——"

"I'd like a car, too. And a guy dressed up in one of them monkey suits to drive me round. You know—a shofer. A shofer named James."

'Why?"

"So's I could get in and say, 'Home, James!'" She laughed. "And I'd like a place down the island," continued Martin dreamily. "Like Far Rockaway, or somewhere—you know."

"Yeah. With a garden——"

"Sure! A garden."

HER head came round. She looked at him, and he thought that she was smiling.

"Funny—ain't it?"

"Funny—yeah! I feel like we was old friends."

"So do I."

"Say—Minnie?"

"What?"

"How'd you come to—what give you the idea? I mean, the river——"

"I was sick of the whole works. I had enough of it."

"I bet it was some guy——"

"Yeah," said Minnie vaguely.

"The dirty dog!"

She glanced at him, her hands playing with the cheap hand-bag in her lap.

"He—he was a dog, all right."

"What'd he do to you?"

"Well, I'll tell you. Say; got a cigarette?"

"Sure!" He fumbled in his pocket, produced a crushed packet, which he held out to her.

"It's your last one."

"Go on; take it. I don' wanna smoke."

"Thanks!"

He struck a match for her, observing, by the flare of it, the youthful curve of her lips, the gleam of her cheek, the dark curl of her lashes. She was pretty.

"Say; I got some gingersnaps in my bag. Bought 'em for my supper. Want one?"

"Sure. I don't care——"

She brought out the gingersnaps, and he munched them hungrily while she smoked.

"They're good. I ain't had a feed since yesterday mornin'."

"Gee!"

"What was you sayin' about that guy?"

Minnie took the cigarette from her lips, blew a cloud of smoke into the April mist.

"Well, it was like this—see? I was workin' in a store—a department store, and this guy—his name was Harry—Harry Van Kirk—" She paused and tapped the ashes from her cigarette. "He was a swell guy—see? And he used to come and talk to me over the counter. I was at the gents' neckwear. He was nuts about me, all right. Well, he says to me, 'Minnie,' he says, 'marry me,' he says, 'and you can have anything you want. I got lotsa dough,' he says. And I fell for him, because he was an awful swell guy and everything. He used to take me out in his car. Some car!"

"You was married to him?"

"Yeah. And, for a while, everything was fine. We had a swell apartment and all. Only, he wouldn' tell me what his business was. Then, one day, the bulls come and pinched him for runnin' a gamblin'-joint—see? And on topa that a dame blew in from—from Alaska and says he was married to her when he was a gold-miner. And I hadda go to the hospital. And I had a baby—and it died."

"Gee, Minnie!"

"Yeah; he was a dog, all right."

"Where is he now?"

"I don' know. I guess he got his. I ain't heard from him in a long time."

"I'd like to get a poke at him—a guy like that!"

"It wouldn' do no good," said Minnie fatalistically. She turned to him. "What's the story of your life?"

"Oh, it ain't nothin'. Only, I had a good job before the war. I was in a storage warehouse—on the movin'-end. I used to make fifty and sixty dollars a week with tips. We had a nice little flat over on the West Side, a Hundred and Ninety-eighth Street, me and my mother—" He suddenly put his face in his hands and gave a whimpering cry. The girl stared at him a moment, then slipped her arm about his shoulders.

"That's all right, bo! Don't you care. She's better off where she is."

MARTIN sat quietly, his elbows on his knees. Minnie withdrew her arm, but her shoulder still pressed his. There was warmth and comfort in the contact.

"Well then, the war come and I was drafted. I was in France and Russia. Three years. When I come home she was dead. I couldn' get my job back because I got hurt in the shoulder, and I couldn' do no heavy liftin'."

"And you hadda bum it?"

"Well, I tried to get some light work and all, but everything was shot to pieces on account of the war. I was night watchman on a construction job for a while, and I got thirty days for vagrancy—that helped. And the rest of the time I slep' in doorways and on park benches—only, the bulls run you outa there."

"Gee! I don't blame you for givin' it the go-by."

"Well, I was hungry, and I didn' see no chance——"

"Me, neither."

His hand groped for hers, found it and squeezed it.

"I'm glad I met yeh, Minnie."

"Same here! It's kinda nice—havin' somebody to talk to. Say—it must be gettin' late."

"Early, you mean. It was past twelve when I come here. I heard a clock strikin'."

They looked at each other.

"Well?" said Minnie sharply.

"I'm game if you are."

"I'm game." Her glance wavered, was turned toward the river. "Gee! It looks cold." Her courage forsook her. She pressed against him, trembling. Her voice was a wail. "I don' wanna die, Martin!"

This time it was he who put his arm round her.

"Look, Minnie! Don't cry. It's all right. We don' hafta do it."

"What else can we do?"

"Well, we can try it a while longer. We'll stick together—I and you. Huh?"

"Stick together?"

"Sure! I'll start in lookin' for a job again. Maybe I can get somethin'. And if I don't—well—hell!—we can always come back here, can't we?"

"Yeah. That's right."

"Whadda you say?"

"You and me, Martin?"

"Sure! As soon as I get a coupla dollars saved up we'll go down to City Hall and get a license and get married. And then nobody won't have nothin' on us."

She drew away from him.

"You're a good guy, Martin. And I"—her voice was bitter with self-reproach—"I'm a dirty liar."

Martin looked at her in surprise.

"Where do you get that stuff?"

"It's a fac'. I'm a liar. I was married, all right—but not to no swell guy. There wasn't no such feller—like Harry Van Kirk—only one I saw in the movies. I got the whole thing outa the movies." He tried to interrupt her, but she rushed on in a fury of self-revelation. "I never was in no department store. My old man kep' a saloon on the East Side. I met my husband there; he was a dancer. He took me up town and taught me. We done cabaret work. We was on the Loew time for a while, but we mostly worked the cabarets. He was a bad actor—used to beat me up. Well, after two years of it, I couldn' stand him no longer, and I left him and teamed up with another guy. And, after that—I just kinda kep' goin' down."

"Why didn' your father help you?"

"My old man? He was broke. Pro'bition—see? He's dead now. Died up the river, doin' time. They sent him away for sellin' booze on the quiet——"

"Yeah. And they's a lot of guys gettin' rich on it."

Minnie nodded. Her hands were fumbling with her hand-bag again. She drew a deep breath.

"Well, I guess maybe—you won' wanna—try it with me—now?"

"Why not?"

"Well, because I——"

"Say—when you're down and out, what's the difference how you got there? I ain't told you everything about myself. I pinched a ten-spot off a guy one night."

"You did?"

"Sure! A fat guy. God, they was money stickin' out all over him! And I was hungry. I hadn' had only a cup of Java since the day before. This was at night—up around Forty-second Street. This guy was just gettin' out of a taxi. He had a diamond in his shirt as big as a pineapple. Well, he flashes his wad and pays the taxi, and then puts the bills back in his overcoat pocket."

"Gee!" said Minnie. "He had it comin' to him, that guy!"

"Sure! Well, I followed him. It was pretty crowded, and I got close to him. I felt kinda weak, but I done it. The big boob! God, he was a fat guy!"

"You frisked him?"

"Sure. For a ten-spot. Oh, boy! Didn' I have some feed that night! And a bed, too."

"I don' blame you, Martin."

"And I don' blame you—for nothin'."

She nestled against him.

'It'll be light soon," she said.

"Yeah. You must be tired."

"So must you."

"Naw! Not me. Look, Minnie; you kinda lie back against me, and I'll put my coat round you—like this—and you go to sleep."

She made no protest, but settled down gratefully into the hollow of his arm, her head against his shoulder. She looked up at him and smiled; then her eyes closed.

He sat holding her, aware of something precious in this strange guardianship. The night was passing. There were gleams in the mist. His head nodded, fell forward on his breast. He, too, slept, but without relaxing his hold of the girl.

HE WAS wakened by the insistent beat of a hurdy-gurdy. It was broad daylight. He looked about apprehensively. But there was no one in sight—not even a cop. He gently woke the girl. His arm was numb and his whole side ached, but he felt a certain pride in his discomfort.

"Minnie, wake up! We gotta beat it away from here."

She sat up quickly, yawning and rubbing her eyes. She was rather bedraggled, and not so pretty as she had been the night before. That is, till she smiled.

"Martin!"

"Yeah. You're all right. Come on; we gotta be goin'."

"Oh, gee; I'm stiff!"

"I ain't. But, then, I'm used to it."

He took her arm, and they walked together up the steps of the terrace. The park dawned on them suddenly with an effect of virgin beauty. It was a precise and formal little park, but the spring sunlight, striking down, gave it grace and favor. In the center of it was a small circular space, paved, where a fountain tossed free silver into the air. Minnie was thirsty, and stopped to drink.

"Have one on me!" she said, with a droll smack of her lips.

Martin laughed.

"Don' care if I do," he replied gaily, and put his own mouth to the jet.

The water was refreshing. He stood up, wiping his lips with his sleeve. He felt curiously light-hearted, almost happy.

The hurdy-gurdy had stopped in the street opposite the park entrance before a white house with a red-tile roof. It burst suddenly into a raucous one-step.

"Hey, Minnie! Le's dance!"

"Come on!"

He put his arm round her: They were both laughing. It was a joke—a joke on them, but also, chiefly, a joke on the world that had rejected them. That was the cream of the jest.

They danced. Their feet scuffed the pavement in time to the music. Minnie drew back her head and smiled at him.

"You're some dancer, Martin!"

"I'll say *you* are!"

She was a different girl. Her cheeks were flushed and her eyes shone. She was as light as a breeze in his arms, slender, and sweet to hold.

On the sidewalk outside the park, a few passers-by had stopped to stare at them.

"Look at them nuts!" grinned Martin. "I guess they think we're cuckoo all right."

"Whadda we care?" laughed Minnie.

The hurdy-gurdy, with scarcely a pause, changed its tune to a dragging tin-pan selection with a castanet accompaniment. Minnie put her hands against his breast and pushed him away from her.

"I'll give the boobs something to look at!" she cried, and plunged passionately into an impromptu Spanish dance.

Martin stood gaping at her for a moment. He had a sense of miracle in the proceeding. Was this whirling, graceful figure the same he had seen bowed on the terrace steps the night before? There was no hint of death in her now. She was completely and spontaneously alive, a creature existing without cause, who took her vitality from the air, from sunlight and a touch of music, halting as it was. The challenge of her abandonment moved him. He was inspired. He gave a shout, and, running toward her, flung himself into a figure of the dance that he had learned from the Bolshevik when he was a soldier in Russia.

Minnie refused to be outdone. She left off her Spanish fandango and began to imitate his wild Slavonic gestures, improvising as she danced. The hurdy-gurdy was clearly out of it. They disregarded the music; there was other and finer music in them now. Martin was red and perspiring. He danced like one possessed, leaping into the air, kicking his heels together, squatting on his haunches and shooting his legs out alternately before him, shouting and clapping his hands.

They kept it up for fifteen minutes. It is possible that they would have gone on till they both dropped exhausted, but now a man in an elegant cutaway coat and neatly pressed trousers, whose head rested solidly upon the support of a stiff white collar, came walking into the park—a bald, blank man without a hat.

Minnie saw him first and stopped, panting, aware in his presence of some unrevealed authority. Martin whirled in mid-air, cracked his heels together, and came down face to face with the phenomenon.

It startled him. Instinctively he dodged, doubling his fist. The bald man fell back a step, then recovered himself.

"Beg pardon, sir," said the latter, with a formality that was obviously a point of honor with him; "you're wanted."

"Wanted?" growled Martin. It was an ominous word. He glanced sidewise at Minnie. Hadn't they better beat it while the beating was good?

She read the question in his eyes and gave a slight shake of her head. Then, turning to the bald man,

"Who wants us?" she demanded.

"Mrs. Kingour, miss. She saw you dancin' in the park 'ere, and sent me out to speak to you. She said, would you kindly step into the 'ouse a moment. She'd like to 'ave a chat with you."

"Both of us?" said Minnie.

"Yes, miss—quite so, miss."

"All right. Sure! We'll come."

"Very good, miss. This way, if you please."

"Come on, Martin!"

Martin stared at her—then at the phenomenon. He had a moment of weakness, of utter cowardice in which he wanted to cut and run. Was life about to play some new sort of ghastly trick on him?

But Minnie's hand was on his arm, pressing it. He squared his shoulders and stepped forward.

THEY followed the bald man out of the park. He led them across the street straight toward the house with the red-tile roof.

The hurdy-gurdy man had moved on, unconscious of the part he had played in the destiny of two lives.

A flight of stone steps, with a heavy iron door standing open at the top of it. A hall, cool and dim, with a tiled floor. An impression of flowers growing against white walls.

"Up-stairs, if you please——"

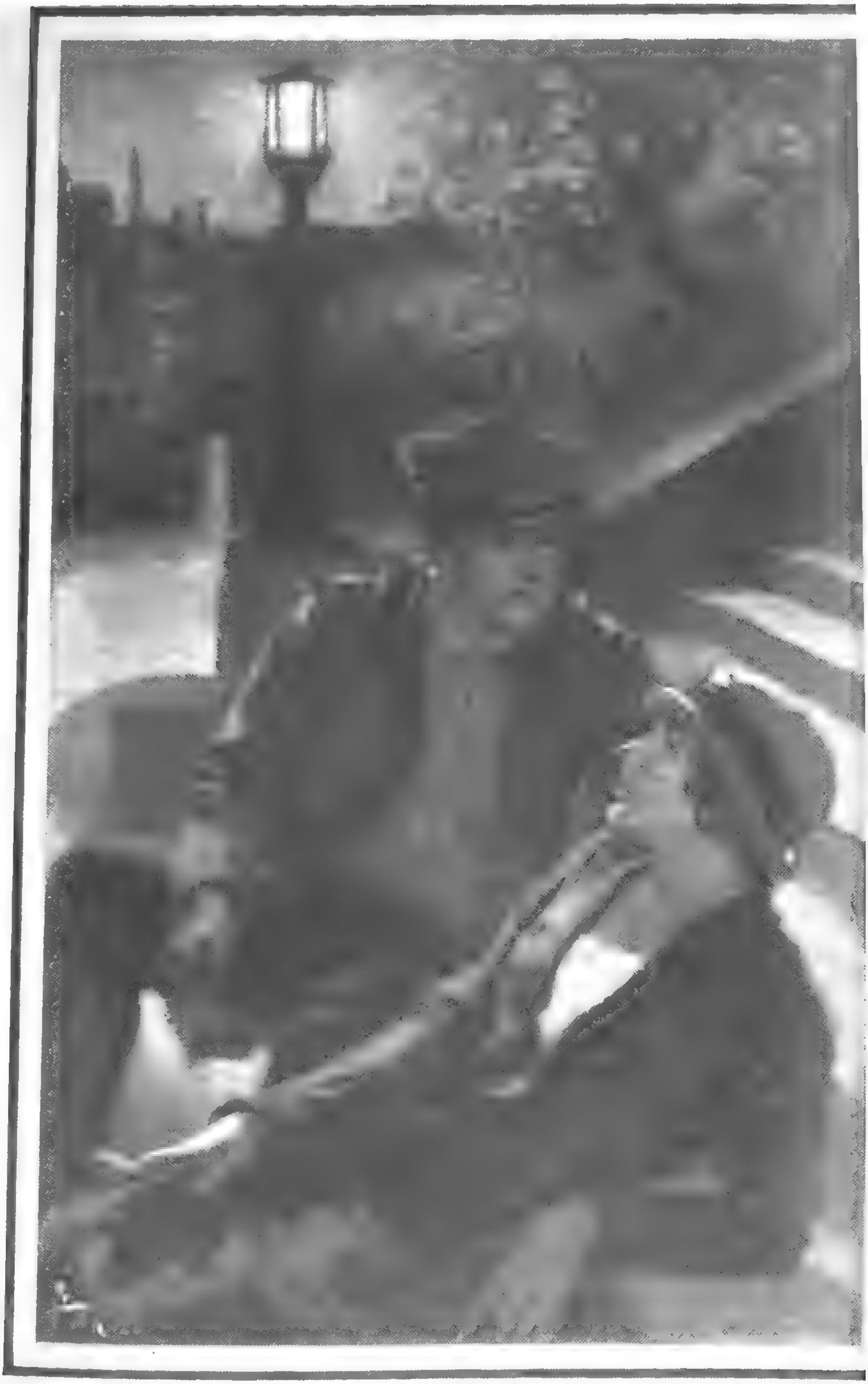
They walked up the broad curving stairs. Another hall and another door. Then a room, stately and spacious, with color distributed about it in subtle harmonies. A dull-red cushion glowing in a corner. Pale golden curtains, that let in the sunlight with discrimination, mellowing it. A marble mantelpiece, with twisted figures holding up the shelf, strange and beautiful. A woman, in a dress like a cloud, sitting in a painted chair, doing nothing.

She turned toward them as they came in. She had copper-colored hair and a face that looked as if it had been worked out of fine clay. When she smiled, it lighted up charmingly.

"How do you do? I am Mrs. Kingour. I saw you dancing in the park and thought I might get you for my tea this afternoon. I was having some professionals, but they disappointed."

She said this casually, with an indifference that ignored entirely the unusualness of the situation. Minnie was quick to take the cue.

"We're professionals ourselves," she said, in a tone that reflected to a nicety the other woman's bored serenity. It left Martin dazed. He stood clutching his torn felt hat and struggling to collect his wits. Only



"It wouldn' do no good," said Minnie fatalistically. She turned to him. "What's the story of yo life?" "Oh, it ain't nothin'. Only, I had a good job before the war."

one thing impressed him, and that was Minnie's cleverness. He was a helpless boob compared with her. He must be careful not to crab her game, whatever it was.

Mrs. Kingour nodded to the butler.

"That's all, Johnson; thank you."

"Very good, madam."

He bowed and went out. They were alone with this charming, indifferent woman.

"Do sit down."

"Thank you."

Was this Minnie speaking? Where did she get this stuff—that refined accent, that nice shading of tone? From Mrs. Kingour, of course. But wasn't she the little wonder to catch on like that?

And the way she took her chair! He made a desperate effort to seat himself gracefully on the upholstered bench by the window, but he succeeded only in being cautious. However, Mrs. Kingour wasn't looking at him.

"You say you are professionals?" She addressed herself to Minnie.

"Oh, yes."

"May I ask your names?"

"We're Minnie and Martin," said the girl, with a smile that seemed to invite recognition of their professional status.

"Oh! And why were you dancing in the park?"

That was a sticker; but Minnie was already answering:

"Well, you see, Mrs. Kingour, we gotta new feature. We're just workin' on it"—she checked the interrogative "see?" that normally would have concluded her sentence. "It's called the—the Dance of the Unemployed."

"Oh, really? How extraordinary! Rather clever of you, though. I understand there's been a great deal of unemployment this year."

"It's the latest thing," said Martin, suddenly finding his tongue. That was good. If he could just think up something like that to say now and then!

"It'll be a hit," put in Minnie confidently.

"But I don't quite see why you should choose the park?" said Mrs. Kingour.

"We wanted to get into the feelin' of it," answered Minnie, without a tremor. "You know, us artists hafta—kinda—get into the spirit of our work. Why, we sat up half the night out there—just kinda gettin' into the spirit of it. That's why we're dressed like this. I'm supposed to be a poor shop-girl—and Martin's a returned soldier—out of a job."

"Really?"

"That's right," said Martin.

"Atmosphere," explained Minnie, with a gesture. "That's what we wanted—atmosphere."

"We got it," said Martin, somewhat grimly.

Mrs. Kingour was interested.

"Could you do this dance for me this afternoon? I think it might be amusing. I'll give you what I was going to give the other people. Five hundred, I believe——"

Martin gasped audibly, but Minnie saved him—and the situation—from disaster.

"We've never worked for five hundred before," she said, with just the proper note of hesitancy. "Still, as it's a new number——"

"That will be splendid! Have you anything else you can do?"

"Oh, yes. Our regular specialties. Russian, Spanish—" Minnie waved her hand.

"You'll come, then? About four-thirty?"

"I guess so," said Minnie. "That is, if we ai-aren't too tired. You see, Mrs. Kingour, we didn' expect to work to-day. And we're pretty tired—sittin' up all night. What do you think, Martin?"

Martin didn't think. He couldn't think. He was lost in a maze of emotions, of admiration for Minnie's overwhelming cheek, of dread of the consequences.

"It's up to you, Minnie," he said.

Minnie sighed.

"Well, I don' like to work when I'm tired——"

Mrs. Kingour interrupted her.

"Oh, no! I must have you. Couldn't you rest here? If I let you go, I'm afraid I'll lose you. As for costumes, if you want any, I've a whole trunkful." She smiled engagingly. "I could give you a room and some luncheon. You could rest. You'd be quite fit by this afternoon."

MRS. KINGOUR looked at Martin. It was clearly his place to speak.

"That's very kind of you. But we—we wouldn't want to put you out any——"

"Not at all. I've oceans of room. Johnson will take care of you."

She rose and pulled a cord of twisted silk.

"I'm really quite keen on you." She smiled. "It must have been great fun, dancing in the park. Had you engaged the hurdy-gurdy?"

"No; that was an accident," said Minnie lightly.

"Not a bad idea, though. I must give a dance out there this spring. I think it might be amusing. One could have three or four hurdy-gurdies instead of an orchestra."

The butler entered.

"You rang for me, madam?"

"Yes, Johnson. I want you to take care of these young people for me. Give them a room, and something to eat, and—oh, yes! Please have one of the maids show them my costumes. They're in some trunk or other."

"Very good, madam. Will you come this way, please?"

"I'm sure we're very much obliged," said Martin, attempting to match with casualness this amazingly casual adventure.

"Oh, it's nothing. Do make yourselves comfortable. And ring for anything you want."

They followed the butler up two more flights of stairs to a room on the top floor at the rear of the house. It was a large white room, with a bed in it and a couch against the wall. There was plenty of floor-space. Minnie noted that as she entered.

"I'll send one of the maids with the costumes," said the butler in his imperturbable manner. "You're to ring if you want anything."

His bald head disappeared down the corridor. Martin gently closed the door and leaned against it.

"Holy cat!" was what he said.

Minnie sank down into a chair and laughed uncontrollably, holding her hand over her mouth. Then she began to sob. Martin was frightened. He went to her and put his hand on her shoulder.

"Buck up, Minnie—Minnie!"

"Yeah. I'm all right." She straightened up, gasping. "Well, my God, here we are!"

"'Here we are' is right." They gazed at each other. "What are we gonna do now?"

Minnie, with a quick movement, rose and caught his sleeve.

"We're goin' through with this bluff—see?" She gave his arm a shake. "We're gonna put it over on that dame down-stairs—her and all her swell friends. It—it's a chance for us, Martin."

"But I can't dance!"

"Yes, you can! Wasn't you dancin' out there? Look; we got six or seven hours. We'll practise here. I'll teach you. She won't hear us. We gotta do it, Martin!"

"But you're tired, Minnie."

"No, I ain't. That's all right. We gotta do it."

Martin grasped her hands.

"You're some game kid, Minnie. I'd take a chance with you any day."

"That a boy, Martin!" She laughed excitedly. "Come on! We'll start on our feature number. It'll be easy. We'll begin kinda slow and draggy—no! You'll be sittin' on a park bench—see? And I'll come breezin' up to you, all beat out and kinda—staggerin'—and then we'll go into the dance. That old *apache* stuff—you know. Then back to the bench again. We can do it to a one-step. That'll save rehearsin' with the orchestra."

"Sure!"

"After that you can do a solo—that Russian dance. It's a pip. And I'll do a Spanish, if I can find a costume. I guess she'll have one. All right! Le's go!"

"How do we start, now?"

"On the bench. The sofa— That's right—no; bend over. You're all in, see? Kinda do a flop when you sit down. There! Hold it. Now I come in." She moved toward him, humming a popular dance-tune, her body swaying rhythmically. 'I'll tap you on the shoulder, and you rise to me. That's it! Now break—keep dancin'! Not too much jazz. It's goin' out. All right; come back. Faster, now!"

She coached him, keeping up a running fire of breathless direction. Once she swore at him, but Martin only laughed, and they went at it again with a renewed sense of companionship.

THEY were interrupted only twice in the three hours following—once by the maid who brought the costumes and again by the imperturbable Johnson, bearing a luncheon-tray.

"Mrs. Kingour wishes to know whether you feel rested," he said, depositing the tray on a stand.

"Oh, fine!" said Minnie. "Great!"

"Very good, miss. Thank you, miss."

The correct, blank man went out. They pounced on the food.

Everybody's Magazine, December, 1922

"My God, Martin! Grapefruit! And chicken patties—no; it's sweetbreads!"

"Pinch me, Minnie!" said Martin, grinning.

"We mustn' eat it all, Martin. We gotta leave some of it—to show we ain't starved."

"Yeah."

"And, Martin, when we're doin' our dance this afternoon, if you lose your nerve, just think of grapefruit and sweetbread patties!"

"And that five hundred bucks!" sighed Martin. "Don't you worry, kid. I'll be there with a wallop."

When they had finished, leaving a carefully computed fraction of the luncheon on their plates, Martin carried the tray out into the hall and, returning, locked the door.

"Time to go to work again, huh Minnie?"

"You're on! We'll jump right into the second part of it—you got the first all right. You know, where you push me away and I spin aroun'. Ready? Got the tune in your head? All right—go!"

They practised furiously for another hour and a half. Minnie had evolved their "feature" of assorted professional material, teaching Martin only the fundamentals and leaving for herself the more complicated movements.

"It's mostly fake stuff," she said, during a pause. "But those boobs won' know the difference. I'll hand 'em a line of talk to start with, and they'll think it's great."

They began again. Martin lacked entirely the girl's experience, but he was quick and wiry, and he picked up the steps with a precision that caused the girl to exclaim,

"You're a nachrel-born dancer, Martin!"

"I guess I'm pretty fair. I learned them Russian dances right off the bat." He stopped, his arm round her waist.

"Say, Minnie; you look awful tired."

"Yeah. I'm tired all right."

"Look! You better lie down on the bed and take a nap— What's that door over there?" He crossed the room and opened the door in question. "Gee! It's a bathroom—all white tile. Come and look."

She walked over to him.

"Swell, ain't it?"

"Sure is! Say, Minnie; why don' you take a nice hot bath and then go to bed? Do you good."

"I'd like to all right."

"Go ahead. You got plenty of time. The dame'll call us."

He pushed her into the bathroom, closed the door, and, walking over to the couch, flung himself down on it with a grunt of satisfaction. His body ached. He was dead tired himself.

BUT he couldn't sleep. He lay with his arm over his eyes, his mind full of broken thoughts, of odd bits of memory. Incidents of his days in the service came back to him, without cause or sequence; a torturing picture of his mother bending over the gas-stove in the kitchen of their flat on the West Side; the face of the fat man whom he had frisked for a ten-spot; the figure of Minnie sitting bowed on the terrace steps; of Minnie talking to Mrs. Kingour; of Minnie dancing in the park——

He heard her come out of the bathroom. She spoke to him quietly.

"Martin?"

He didn't answer. She lay down on the bed. He waited till he was sure she was asleep. Then he got up and went over to her.

She was lying on her side, her cheek on her hand. Her hair was down about her shoulders. In her underwaist, with her dress thrown over her, she looked small, childish—even more childish than she had looked on the steps.

Tears came into his eyes. He shut his hands and cursed under his breath. But that didn't express what he wanted to express.

There was a blanket on the foot of the bed, a pink, fluffy thing. He unfolded it and spread it over her. Then, stooping, he touched her cheek with his lips.

She stirred, but did not wake. He tiptoed back to the couch and lay down again. He mustn't fail her. God, no! Five hundred dollars! A place with a garden at Far Rockaway or somewhere. "Home, James!"

An hour later, Johnson knocked at the door. Martin rose and opened it.

"Mrs. Kingour says you'll be wanted soon," announced the butler.

"All right," said Martin.

He turned. Minnie was sitting up, smiling at him.

"Time for our act—huh?"

"Yeah. How'd you sleep?"

"Fine!" She jumped off the bed, holding the pink blanket round her. "Where'd I get this thing?"

"I put it over you. Thought you might catch cold."

"Oh! Where's that costume I picked out?"

Martin collected the colored stuffs from the chair where she had thrown them. She took them from him and started toward the bathroom, but stopped and looked at him over her shoulder.

"Say—Martin?"

"Huh?"

"Did you—when I was asleep there—did you kiss me?"

"Yeah. Kinda."

Her face grew strangely peaceful, strangely content.

"I didn' know. I thought maybe I dreamed it," said Minnie.

THE dancing team of Minnie and Martin is famous in New York now. It is famous both in professional and in social circles. Its rise has been rapid. In fact, it never was heard of till the afternoon of Mrs. Kingour's tea, when some two hundred of New York's smartest set were electrified by the execution of a new dance, which ultimately became the popular "Panhandle." But the team's press-agent states unreservedly that there is no justification in the attitude of certain jealous persons who would attribute its fame to chance. Martin, according to the press agent, received his training in Russia, while Minnie, the inimitable, was purely a product of Broadway—a young dancer of exceptional talents, who had won her way to recognition by hard work and sheer genius.

However that may be, it is certain that the team is prosperous. Their combined earnings approximate that of a Wall Street banking-house. Photographs of their Park Avenue apartment have been published repeatedly in the Sunday newspapers, and their specially designed limousine, with its black-and-gold markings, is known to the *cognoscenti* up and down Fifth Avenue.

But, on a certain April morning, a year from the day made notable by Mrs. Kingour's tea, the black-and-gold car passed unobserved through the streets of the upper East Side. It rolled into the exclusive neighborhood of the wealthy riverside community, turned about the park and came to a halt at the top of the terrace.

Minnie and Martin got out and walked down the steps. It was before daylight, and the air was chill.

"It wasn't as cold as this a year ago," said Martin.

"No," said Minnie, and drew her fur-trimmed cape closer about her.

They sat down on the bottom step, their shoulders touching.

"Funny, ain't it?"

"Yeah; it's funny, all right."

They were silent a long time. Below them the river rolled darkly, with an occasional murmur. A tug passed with lights, and other lights curved in a great arc toward the Long Island shore. The night was growing gray.

"Yeah; it's funny." Minnie's voice was slow with reminiscence. "Everything's different now. We're different, too."

"Sure!"

"We got everything we want. Everything we thought of—that night."

"Just about."

"Do you think we're any happier'n we were then?" Minnie spoke softly.

Martin laughed and put his arm round her.

"I'll say we are!"

"Yeah; I guess we're happier all right. Only——"

"What, Minnie?"

"I don' know. Only—we had somethin' then—that we haven't got now. That's funny, too."

"You're right. I was just thinkin' that myself. What was it, Minnie?"

"I don' know. It was somethin' we had—and it's gone. We won't never have it again."

Martin made no attempt to answer her. After a moment, he said,

"Well, I guess it's time we was goin'."

"Yeah." She got up, stood muffled in her expensive cape, looking down at the river. Then they walked back up the steps.

The car was waiting for them. As they went toward it, Martin was conscious of a vague disappointment, bewildering to his mind—bewildering, because he knew that, no matter how long he lived, he could never put it into words. They were happy—yes. But the joke was no longer a joke. The cream had gone from the jest.

He handed Minnie into the limousine and then turned to the chauffeur.

"Home, James!" said Martin.

Captain Sebastien

The Son of Robert W. Chambers, Well-Known Novelist, Introduces Himself to Everybody's Readers with a Good Story of a Rare Type. It's About the Sea

By Robert Husted Chambers

A SHIP at anchor or in dock is at best only a hulk—a thing of wood and iron and copper rivets. Helpless, she bumps and lurches at the ground-swell's whim. Her soul lies dormant. But when the wind blows and she runs free, trembling beneath her topsails; when the wheel kicks and the stays sing and the log-line burns the spool, then she becomes a ship. Each straining sail and quivering timber, the rudder's creak, the rope's screech whipping through the gasket tell of life as headlong she tramples down the bow-wash.

Then, too, a soul is reborn—the complex, composite soul of a ship which she has taken from those who built her and those who sail her. For sometimes men lose their hearts to their ships, and their souls as well; and the ship absorbs them, molds them and makes them hers until man and ship become one. So they go down to the sea together, one heart, one soul until the end.

When Captain Sebastien lost his ship, he lost his soul as well. Thirty years he had sailed her, fought her through storm and hurricane, guided her through shifting sandbanks, sweated becalmed beneath the Caribbean sky while the black paint blistered and the dead sails swung above. And in that time the heart of Captain Sebastien had gone out to his ship, and she was life and breath of his body and of his soul.

It would have been bad enough if the *Miromar* had gone down under him, with his hand upon her wheel. "Posted as missing" when the reefs' teeth ripped the bottom from her hull—that would have been an end worthy of him and her. But now she was old and wormy, with warped keel and gaping seams which would not calk. Her day had passed; the company that owned her pensioned off her skipper and laid her away, tied to a rotten piling in Nassau harbor.

There the black diving boys stripped what the company had left of her, and she began to settle slowly at her mooring.

As for her Captain Sebastien, having lost both heart and soul, he went "on the beach," a derelict himself, drawing his pension the first of every month and drinking it by the tenth. He was past sixty now. Ships were few; the clippers' glory had surrendered to the age of steam. Nobody would give work to a worn-out "Portugee" when younger men could be had for the asking. The company which he had served faithfully told him it had done enough—and forgot him.

The captain began to settle slowly like his ship. The "beach" had him—the beach which, like the sea, never gives up anything that it has claimed.

He took up with a half-caste woman for a while. She left him for a buck nigger from Trinidad who sailed a sponging-schooner. After that, he took to *aguardiente* in earnest, until even the black roustabouts on the docks jeered him.

But every day he went down to the pier-head to see the *Miromar*. She was nearly awash now, paint scaled, hatches choked with refuse. Bronze weed clogged her hawsers; from the booms a few rags of sail fluttered.

Captain Sebastien would stand looking at her until it came over him that he was like his ship. Then he would turn away, loose-lipped, mumbling, feeling in the pockets of his ragged trousers for a shilling to make him drunk enough to forget her and himself.

He did not miss the sea. To him, it was only an enemy that he had fought and always beaten. It was his ship he loved, his *Miromar*, dying by inches at her mooring. Month after month he had watched her die. The heart of Captain Sebastien was like the shreds of her tattered mainsail.

"If I could have her again!" he thought. "Or any ship!"

But there was no work for worn-out sailormen in Nassau; nor would he have taken it if any had been offered.

Then, one morning, he saw a fat man dressed in white standing on the pier-head, regarding the schooner with calculating eyes. Captain Sebastien recognized a director of the company and touched his cap.

"Come along," said the man briefly. "I want to talk to you."

He led the way to one of the innumerable sailors' barrooms that line the water-front and took a corner-table. A bottle of Cuban *aguardiente* was brought with two glasses, but the director did not touch his own.

Captain Sebastien, who took free liquor when he could get it, helped himself largely. Presently the director said,

"Are you listening?"

"*Si, señor.*"

The man in white leaned forward and began to talk rapidly. Captain Sebastien drank and listened. Slowly his bent shoulders straightened; his eyes glittered ominously. Suddenly he sprang up.

"No, *señor!* You ask me to sink my ship for the insurance that she will carry. I cannot do it—never!"

Said the director, eying him keenly,

"There is a thousand pounds in it for you."

Captain Sebastien struck the table until the glasses rattled.

"To sink the *Miromar*, my *Miromar!* No, I tell you—a thousand times no!"

Then his new self caught him again and he sat down, whimpering.

"I am an old man, *señor*—very poor. Perhaps if the company knew, my pension would be increased. Will the *señor* speak to them for me?"

The director ignored the plea and went on suavely:

"Listen; we fit her out. She sails in ballast to Jacksonville, supposedly to take on cargo. As for the rest, there are a hundred reefs in the Bahama Passage; you can take your choice. No risk, and a *thousand pounds!*"

A thousand pounds! More than his pension in three whole years. With it he need no longer go hungry as the months drew near their end. Besides, he could buy enough whisky to forget—perhaps.

"Think it over," suggested the director, not unkindly.

Captain Sebastien rose and wandered away toward the docks. Now he could see the *Miromar's* masts gaunt against the Bahaman sky. And every spar called him, each rope and ratline of her rigging. The broken stays reached out to draw him to her; and their frayed tendrils curled about his heart, while in his brain seaman and beach-comber struggled for mastery. When he returned, his face was like death.

"I will do it," he said, "for a thousand pounds. Has the *señor* any more *aguardiente?* My glass is empty."

"BLINKIN' coffin-ship I calls 'er," remarked the dock-master above the clank and clang of the capstan. "'At's wot she is—blinkin' coffin-ship."

But the schooner's sides were painted, her sails like a gull's wings, and the stiffness had not yet gone from her new manila halyards. From wheel to bowsprit she reeked of tar and fresh turpentine.

On deck the song of the chantey-men, and the vibrant voice of Captain Sebastien:

"Heave ho! Once more! Come again!"

The rigid mainsail began to flutter. A jib crept slowly along the foremast, then, as the schooner's head paid off, bellied out, pulling the boom to leeward with a slam.

"Slack off! Make that fast!"

So the *Miromar* stood out into the bay with her former captain at the wheel, with a mixed crew, a Hindu cook, and a Jamaican black-boy mate.

All sails set, she beat down the channel, the trade-winds fair on her quarter, the red shoals of Andros well to leeward.

There was a gray mist on the sea's face, and the flung spume blew gray across the decks. Overhead, three orange-tinted sun-dogs revolved slowly.

"Bimeby she blow," thought Captain Sebastien.

But he did not care, with the white sails shaking, the wheel's kick to his hand, and the *Miromar* aquiver beneath his feet.

He remembered the voyages he had sailed her to the far corners of the Caribbean, ports and harbors that he had known, the Danish islands—now no longer Danish—Barbados, Guadaloupe, the Grenadines, the circle of the Windwards, and Martinique, an emerald in a sea of jade with Pelée smoking in the background. Each port had a memory for him and for the *Miromar*. Surely life was not so bad after all. A short trip, a fair breeze, and at the end a thousand pounds—what more could a sailor ask? He put the wheel over three points, whistling a chantey.

But something was lacking. Somehow, the schooner did not respond as readily as she always had. The hulk swung slowly, hesitatingly, and finally lurched on in the new course.

"She never act so queer before," thought the captain.

Presently George, his Jamaican black boy, came forward and stood beside him.

"*Baas*," he said awkwardly, "Ah tink big sto'm come soon."

"*Si;* she come." Captain Sebastien nodded.

"*Baas*, Ah'se feared. New paint look fine, but de seams crack. Ole ship berry rotten. Mast snap lak match-wood when big wind hit 'er."

The captain stiffened.

"Never I lose the ship I sail; dat mos' forty year now. So long man can take her through the hurricane, I take her."

"Us go to Jacksonville, *baas?*"

"*Si.* We clear for Jacksonville."

The mate shook his head.

"She hit us fo' us get dar, sho. Reef bad 'long Bahama Passage."

A hundred reefs! And he could take his choice! And, as Captain Sebastien considered the errand on which he sailed, he became an old man again; suddenly he tottered, clutching the wheel-box.

"Fo' Gawd's sake! Yo' sick, *baas?*"

Captain Sebastien shook his head.

The *Miromar*, released for an instant, swung slowly up into the wind. Booms swayed and creaked; the reef-points fluttered against the sails; a jib began to flap madly like a crippled bird. Then the masts rocked as the skipper brought her back with a savage jerk. The negro stumbled, clinging to the port davits.

"*Baas*, she moan an' tremble when yo' treat her rough lak dat. Bimeby sto'm come. Ah'se mighty feared."

The skipper's sagging jaw snapped shut. His orders came in curt-clipped phrases.

"Port watch, lay aft! Clear decks and batten down! Take in all sail aloft! Lash down; don't stop to furl!" He glared at the Jamaican. "I show you. No storm can beat Captain Sebastien."

There came the slam of closing hatches, the squeak of pulleys. Among the shrouds, half-naked men clambered and clawed like cats, tugging, shouting until the topsails sagged from loosened halyards, and they gathered and made them fast along the yards. A bearded seaman, coiling slack from the main-sheet, looked up and grinned.

"Ver' soon make all snug, Cap'n."

"*Si*, Pedro. We clear for hurricane."

"You t'ink *Miromar* stan' it?"

"*Si;* she good ship." The captain spoke of his vessel with wistful tenderness.

Ram Sammy, the cook, thrust his turban through the galley port-hole and bellowed. The off watch tumbled up from below; George went forward, and Captain Sebastien remained alone, studying the tarnished binnacle.

IN THE schooner's wake, yellow foam churned among the weed patches. A school of porpoises flashed and darted beneath her bow. Above, a frigate-bird sailed, mewing.

A fruit-steamer passed a mile to windward, outlines blurred through the haze. Captain Sebastien recognized her by the smoke-stacks, the *San Carlos*, Isthmian Line, north-bound from Colon, her decks piled high with cargo. To him, she was the personification of the new era that had crowded him and his kind to the wall. Each line and mass of her told of strength and efficiency—the bow-curve, the slanting derricks fore and aft the cabins. Strength and efficiency in her iron plates; and the throbbing turbines echoed "strength, strength and efficiency" as she vanished, hull down, over the horizon.

And the *Miromar* was rotten beneath his feet!

When the mate came aft to stand watch, he found the captain crumpled across the wheel-box, his face buried in his arms.

The watch passed; again the captain took the wheel. A gray fog-bank settled lower. The sun-dogs died, and the sun went down, amber into a smoky sea. After a while a ghost-moon rose and struggled with the haze, fading at last into a wall of driving scud. There were no stars.

"She come soon now," muttered Captain Sebastien. "Let her come." And he gave orders to take in two reefs.

Dull lanterns gleamed along the foremast of the *Miromar*. Aloft, the drowsy lookout struck the bell.

The breeze quickened, lifting the shrouding mist. Suddenly a streak of lightning split the night, and by it Captain Sebastien saw the rampart to the north, a vast wall of cloud and spray and seething water rushing across the sea toward the *Miromar*.

He glared at his old enemy that had never beaten him. It would not beat him now. Grimly he flung his ship against it. And the ship that had never forgotten him quivered her recognition as she bucked head on into the waves.

THEN the hurricane caught her, pounded, and flung her back, rolling until her lee rail vanished in a whirl of foam. Trembling, she righted herself and bucked ahead. And Captain Sebastien, with his hand upon her pulse, felt in her the surge of passionate life and will and power that matched his own.

A mountain of water towered above the bows, caved and swept aft. Captain Sebastien saw, and braced himself. Another deluge followed, still another.

In the flooded fo'c's'le, men were already astir, splashing and groping toward the ladder. Dark figures scrambled through the hatchways and gained the deck. Behind them, the bowsprit buckled and collapsed.

"Lower away on the jib!"

The figures moved below the flapping sail; Captain Sebastien saw the straining arms, watched the jib start downward with a run. Then a sheet of rain blotted out everything beyond the mainmast.

Peal on peal of thunder, and through it the groan and wrench of cordage and shaking timbers, the winches' snarl, the screech of rusted pulleys. From the galley came a low, continuous wail, Ram Sammy pleading intercession from his squint-eyed gods. A stay parted like the report of a pistol.

Then, with a crash, the mizzenmast split and toppled forward. There came a squeal of terror from the Hindu. But it missed the galley and crushed to splinters the lee gunwale amidships.

The *Miromar* heeled dangerously. Water poured through her scuppers. George made his way aft, groping the bulwarks.

"*Baas*, she not las' much longer. Bes' lo'er de life-boat so's us got de chance."

"Lay for'ard, damn you, and clear that wreckage!"

Ax-blows rang out in quick succession, and presently the stump slid overboard, carrying a tangle of ropes and broken stays. The schooner's head paid off, swung back, and the hull slowly righted.

Comber after comber swept the *Miromar*. Bits of wreckage began to float aft—a bucket, a broken hatch, a mass of tangled running-gear. Again the negro made his way aft.

"*Baas*, reef berry close now."

"I keep her clear."

"Mast split an' crack; bow mos' cave in a'ready. Ship a-shakin' la'k she fall to pieces soon."

"She'll make it."

"Hear dat!"

Somewhere from the darkness came the high-pitched shriek of a steamer's siren.

"De *San Carlos*. She strike dere on Dogfish Reef. Better us take de boat, *baas*, fo' too late."

Again and again the fruiter's whistle wailed her message of disaster.

"Big seas poun' her, *baas*; she not las' long."

A wave struck the *Miromar* over the port bow, lifted her and hurled her toward another, head on.

"Steady! She go under!"

A sudden crash, a cry in the darkness. Then a rush of water that tore the galley from its fastenings and bore it seaward.

Again a strangled shriek from beyond the fo'c's'le. The captain strained his eye into the shadows.

"Go for'ard. Find out what happen!"

Man and ship fought their way onward through the storm. The rain slackened. After a long while, the negro returned.

"Pedro he gone; John an' Miguel gone,

too. Ram Sammy go with galley. Mas' fall on Olsen; break his back. Crew berry feared."

The *San Carlos's* siren bellowed distantly again. Presently it ceased, and a dull explosion reverberated through the mist. George gripped the captain's arm.

"Lis'n! No more *San Carlos!* Big sea got her an' her boilers blow up. She breakin' up out dar 'cross Dogfish Reef."

So the giant fruiter died, despite her efficiency, her steel and turbine; while the *Miromar* lived on, and her rotten planking held firm as the will of her captain in the battle with the wind and sea.

Bits of wreckage began to come aboard, crates, green bunches of bananas to which half-drowned tarantulas still clung. A lifeboat passed, heaving and pitching, and a man stood in the stern-sheets and shouted.

Ahead came the roar of the reef, and the snarl of waters among the coral. The *Miromar* swept onward.

"Stand by to go about!" bellowed Captain Sebastien. "Hard a-lee!"

Over went the wheel—hard over. The schooner wallowed heavily to windward, hung for an instant in stays, then careened headlong into the other tack. Booms swung with a slam; the port rail went under.

Captain Sebastien shook the spray from his eyes.

"You see we make it," he shouted, as the *Miromar* shot through the channel like an arrow. But the wrench had been too much for her weathered seams, and she began to settle by the head.

ALL night the storm drove her until the wind died and the cloud-bank split asunder. A ghastly dawn broke over the sea; the mist lifted.

"Look like we win," thought Captain Sebastien. He peered forward.

Beyond the mainmast, the schooner was a mass of wreckage, ripped planking, ropes and twisted halyards, her fo'c's'le stove, mizzen and galley long since gone by the board. Across the fore hatch, Olsen, the Swede, lay. He was quite dead. The wind stirred his blond hair gently.

The strain had passed with the night. But something else had passed as well. In the livid dawn, the spent souls of Captain Sebastien and his *Miromar* drifted out together over the sea. Only their shells remained—a battered hulk; a peevish old man who clutched the tiller with shaking fingers. Well, anyhow, it had been a good fight, and they had won it together.

The captain's mind went back over the past. He saw Nassau harbor again as he had left it—ships at anchor in the offing, red roofs and pink coquina walls straggling back from the water-front; and, in the background, the white bulk of Government House gleaming through the palm trees. He remembered the interview in the seaman's pub; the gimlet-eyes of the director across the table. Then he saw again the picture of the *Miromar*, his *Miromar*, rotting at her mooring, dying there as he had watched her die month after month. He saw himself "on the beach" once more, a derelict—like his ship.

From the hold came the swish and gurgle of the pumps. Tortuga could not lie far away now. They would keep her afloat until she got there. Far to starboard stretched a curving thread of foam, where the green surges of the Gulf Stream met and split again upon Tortuga Reef. Beyond that the harbor—if he wished to make it.

The reef roared and pounded.

Slowly he brought the bow-head up into the wind; the sails hung idle.

"Abandon ship!"

It was not an order, only a sort of querulous entreaty. Wondering, the crew trooped aft to obey. The life-boat swung out on creaking davits. Fore and aft men unwound the tackle from the cleats.

"Lower away!"

The boat started downward in erratic jerks. There came a dull splash, then the bump of gunwales against the stern. Still Captain Sebastien sat, gazing at nothing, astride the wheel-box. The voice of the mate floated up from below.

"A'ready, *baas!*"

"Cast off!"

After a while, George called again.

"*Baas*, us wait fo' you!"

"Cast off—curse you!"

There came a splash and swish of dipping oars, the clink of brackets. The captain's hand tightened about the worn spokes. Slowly he swung the *Miromar* to starboard, swung her until her sails filled and her battered prow pointed toward Tortuga Reef. Then he lashed himself to the wheel—and waited.

By the Author of "Mountain Farmers"

Granny Hooper

A Novelette Complete in This Issue

Everybody's Has Published Few Stories That Were So Highly Praised as "Mountain Farmers." This Is Another Beautifully Written, Intensely Moving Tale of the Quaint Folk Who Live in the North Carolina Mountains

By Stanley Olmsted

Illustrations by Harold Anderson

GRANNY HOOPER had by no means lost her hold. At intervals of about two hours all during daylight, in all weathers save the wettest and windiest, she left her chair by the chimney fireplace, hobbled forth from the Hooper cabin, bent but unbowed, and came back dragging after her always some fallen limb of a tree.

In this way she kept her own limbs from "gitten growed to that 'ere splint-bottom seat," as she put it. She also kept up a steady supply of kindling-wood as auxiliary to all the fires—and there were sometimes three of them in the three-room log house. Just out of Grandmaw Hooper's hearing, the other Hoopers often spoke of how they would miss the kindling-pile when Grandmaw Hooper should be laid away with various other Hoopers in the rail-fenced enclosure on the hill.

The yield of fallen boughs was nicely adapted to the season. When the days were lashed by driven rain, Granny Hooper had no need of going far. White Wing Creek laid at her feet what she ventured out for. In days of spring and summer, on the other hand, when White Wing Valley lay beneath a lazy haze, and glories bluish or golden simmered about the peaks, she often had to traverse the road for a considerable distance. The bubbling rush of the mountain stream was chary of bringing down fire-wood. But by the beginning of October the supply began to increase. By mid-November it was practically inexhaustible.

People said along White Wing that old Granny Hooper would outlast her daughter, Mrs. Gormley—Vance Gormley's widow, mother of Brice and Be'trice. It looked not unlikely. For Vance Gormley's widow was long, hollow-chested and spare. Five feet ten, of sinewy wiriness; with a record of work behind her in field and kitchen and child-bearing that would have made the average of the oldest plow-mule on the precipitous farm lands look like leisure itself.

And for all that, Mrs. Gormley was, in the language of her aged mother, "always a-gruntin'."

The latest trouble was her daughter Be'trice. This girl, her youngest child, still held to the stand she had taken in the spring over everybody's protest but Grandmaw Hooper's.

Such sources of bitterness had been many in Mrs. Gormley's life. Not infrequently they had been tragedies, in so far as death is always tragic. And then the grunts had been withheld for months of

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silent grief, with unending spells of weeping, sullen and soundless.

BE'TRICE, now on the threshold of her twenties, was separated from Brice by a great gap of years. Seven brothers and sisters should have filled the gap. All had returned to the mountain earth from which their awakening had been but for a few bright, barefoot years. All, that is, save the one who represented the family contribution to the great war, and who would now have been twenty-four.

This lad had been conscripted in Stoversville, the county-seat. Pale with terror of the unknown, he had traveled on a train for the first time in his life, and endlessly, as it seemed to him, until he found himself at last in a great camp on the flat, hot plains of South Carolina. Everything, from the green of the trees to the luster of the stars, was as unlike his native mountain country in the other Carolina as earth is unlike heaven. On the second morning his sergeant had come upon him bitterly weeping and begging to be sent back home.

"Lemme go back!" he pleaded. "Oh, lemme go back! I don't like France—I don't!"

Eventually his dust was to commingle with the soil of the real France. The very poppies that sprang from it must have felt themselves alien.

The youngest two sons of Granny Hooper completed the present household. They were respectively slightly under and slightly over forty, and had remained unmarried. Brice's age was between that of his uncles. He also was a celibate.

"Them Hoopers ain't a marryin' crowd," ran the adage along White Wing, overlooking the fact that nine families of the immediate descendants of Granny Hooper dotted the United States from Stoversville to Oklahoma.

That four adults, unmated and childless, should remain in the old log home back of Atoah range gave the Hoopers a local distinctiveness. It reached out even to Be'trice, insulating her like a mantle of invulnerability from the usual random "courtin'" by the youths of the region.

She was slim, pretty in a gray-eyed, vigorous little way, and, by the only standards known or understood, ultraefficient. Nobody could cook better string-beans or make lighter soda biscuit or crisper cornpone. Yet she had rated as an old maid from the day she had bound up her two braids of brown hair and lengthened her skirt.

Weeks ago, Be'trice had made her decision to educate herself and become a teacher. It was now early in November; but she was sticking to it. That was the present theme of her mother's plaint.

Granny Hooper and her daughter sat before the fire discussing it as they had discussed it a thousand times since the spring. Exhausted by Maw Hooper's keen intuitiveness, Mrs. Gormley always fell back on her steady increase of aches and pains, her decayed teeth, her mounting years.

"Them three men eats more'n any six I ever seen, particular this time o' year," she said. "I jist kain't keep a-goin' when Be'trice ain't here. I'm liable to drop dead any day."

"The Lord," replied Maw Hooper, stooping to lay a coal on top of her cob pipe, "the good Lord can strike any of us down with His kind hand o' wrath, jist like ye'd cuff a pup when he's least expectin' it. But that ain't no reason for any of us countin' on droppin' dead before His time to take us."

The mother of Be'trice spread a despondent hand with outstretched fingers over her cheek, half caressing an area of diffuse discomfort from the bad teeth.

"And He ain't a-goin' to take ye any sooner, B'lindy, jist cause Be'trice is set to make somethin' out of herself without waitin' for Providence. Don't flatter yerself. Ye're old Granny Hooper's daughter, and ye're here for a good long stay yit."

B'lindy's retorting sigh was nearly soundless. It was submerged, inundated by the profound hush within the house and outside it. The very absence of the three hound-dogs left a deathly emptiness in the covered dividing porch, where they sprawled most of the year, snoring and snapping at their fleas.

The aged and the aging woman had eaten their midday meal alone—a mere cold snack when Be'trice and "the boys" were away. It was the season when Brice and Lishey and Joe rewarded themselves for toil that had known no let-up from the late-winter plowing until after the corn fodder was harvested. It was their period of earthly paradise when they reaped blisses than which no effort of their imaginations could conceive anything better. They brought home squirrels at night, and sometimes a coon. They would not shoot the partridges, because they believed they protected the corn furrows in the springtime by grubbing for the worms. They left the ground-hogs lying where they slew them. "Only a no-'count Cherokee Indian will eat a whistle-pig."

Yet the hunting was not plentiful. It had been three years since Brice Gormley, keenest shot among the Hooper boys, had brought home a deer. It had been seven years since the three of them together had outwitted a bear, after four days of exhaustive strategy.

THREE miles from the Hooper cabin by short-cut trail stood the schoolhouse in the midst of a woods pierced by the county road.

Be'trice Gormley and Maun Hunnicut, youngest of the Bear Creek Hunnicuts, sat on a fallen tree directly behind the gabled board structure. The reputation of the Hunnicuts in the county was unsavory. But Be'trice had never heard anything against Maun.

The schoolhouse was elevated above the road on the slant of a hill. A clump of birch saplings screened the outlook of the lad and the girl completely in the one direction. In the other, they had a clear view of the road through an opening between two poplars. They themselves were more or less hidden from inspection by any save the most prying eyes.

Be'trice had been engaged in an argument that had become a daily occurrence with Maun. He was her senior by eight months. But Be'trice felt nearly old enough to be Maun's mother—certainly old enough to be his big sister.

The noon recess-hour was always amply long. It had to be. Mrs. Leadman, the teacher, lived a half-mile down the road and cooked her farmer husband's dinner every midday. The Leadmans had had no children. But the scant period between twelve and one o'clock rarely sufficed the busy young matron. It was well after one now. She might be back any time.

Maun had made it his accommodating habit to keep a sharp lookout for Mrs. Leadman, to pull the rope of the bell hung under the eaves of the front gable as soon as he could hurry to it after glimpsing her in the distance. This brought in the children from brake and creek-bank and field, diminishing the time lost in getting them together for the afternoon session.

"What are you a-startin' so about?" exclaimed Be'trice, noting that Maun had jumped slightly and seemed to regard a crack in the boarding of the rear schoolhouse wall with furtiveness.

"Do ye reckon," he whispered, "do ye reckon Mrs. Leadman might ever take it into her head to slip round back by the path instead of the road, like she always done before now?"

Be'trice shrugged, scorning to lower her voice.

"Well—if she done that, you couldn't see her a-comin'—that's all. She'd have to do her own bell-ringin', which is nothin' but what's expected, anyhow."

Her complacence was stimulative. Maun began to talk again in his natural tone.

"Sometimes I feel jist like she's a-spyin' on us, Be'trice. She might tell tales to yo' maw—and yo' maw might tell Brice——"

"What would there be to tell?"

"Ever'body knows Brice Gormley," said the lad. "Like as not he'd never open his mouth to ye about it. He'd take it out on me. If he thought—if he suspected I was axin' ye to marry me, I believe he'd like as not try to kill me, Be'trice. And then ye know I'd have to try to kill him."

Be'trice laughed aloud.

"He'd never try to kill you if he knowed how far I am from havin' you, Maunny. Sometimes I think you don't understand how firm I've set my mind—ever since I said 'No' four times hand-runnin' to old Squid Jenkins, with some of his daughters older'n me and maw and the boys insistin' I ought to take him jist 'cause he's got two farms and a store."

"It was an insult to ye," growled Maun. "He always proposes to old maids and widders."

"Jist as soon as I can get Mrs. Leadman's certificate," she went on, "I'm a-goin' to teach that school down on your own Bear Creek. And I ain't a-goin' to have to rush home and cook some man's dinner and then rush back again, either."

"It seems to me," sulked Maun, "that ye

do a heap of rushin' home as it is. How many times has yo' maw broke down and sent for ye since this term started?"

The girl's face clouded.

"You're right, Maun. I come down here to board with Mrs. Leadman 'cause there wasn't any use tryin' to study any lessons at home. And they've had me home twelve days out of the last four weeks—bringin' me word maw's sick. "

"They miss ye, Be'trice, I reckon. I don't blame 'em."

His hand tried to find her own.

"None o' that, Maun!" But she colored beautifully. "As I was a-sayin'—it used to frighten me about her at first. But every blessed time I've gone back she's pearted right up and been no more sick than I am this minute. She thinks I've got enough educatin' already—and the boys back her up—and me as ignorant as a hill-bill!"

"Ye oughtn't to say that, Be'trice. If I could do my sums as quick as ye, I'd feel smart enough to turn into a lawyer."

Her little jaw set itself with a nearly audible click.

"If maw don't stop pesterin' me while I'm tryin' to make something out of myself, I'll jist up and hitch with some feller, if only to spite them men of ours who think I ought to stick right home and work for 'em forever. They sick maw onto it—they do! They're always tellin' her she ain't got the strength to get on without me. Sometimes I feel like Grandmaw Hooper's the only friend I've got in my own family."

Into Maun's brown eyes there leaped a light.

"If I thought her sendin' for ye would drive ye into marryin' me, Be'trice, I'd keep her sendin'——"

He was never to finish. The bell in the front gable clanged suddenly, viciously. It had a vindictive, ominous sound. Be'trice tried to laugh it away.

"So she did take the lower path!"

Her nonchalance didn't ring exacty true.

"I'm jist like a Indian," whispered Maun hoarsely. "When folks is a-spyin' I can feel it. She slipped into that front door a long time ago. I could feel her snappy eye at that knot-hole."

"Aw, pshaw! You jist imagine it," said Be'trice. "You goose! Don't walk right out with me in plain sight of everybody. Dodge into them bushes and come up saunterin', as if you'd been miles away. I don't believe she saw us—I don't!"

Maun could see that, for all her protesting, she shared his fear that Mrs. Leadman had looked and listened through the crack.

"NO, BE'TRICE," said Mrs. Leadman, as her pupil and boarder started to accompany her down the road after the dismissal of the school; "you ain't a-goin' home with me to-day. You'll be takin' the other direction. Yo' maw's sent for you. She's sick and kain't do the work.

"Sent for me? Who said so?"

"Yo' brother Brice. He passed our house while I was cookin' dinner. I fried one of the squirrels he'd shot for him and my old man. He hurried away a'terward—said he'd go right by the schoolhouse and look for you. I thought he'd told you himself, or I'd 'a' spoke of it earlier."

Be'trice went pale. Here was a new possibility touching unseen presences sensed by Maun.

"I've written yo' maw this letter I want you to give her. You'll tell her it ain't for anybody's eyes but hers."

The Hooper brand of honor was another mountain tradition. A letter placed in Be'trice's care might have contained her death-warrant and she would have delivered it—provided, of course, she had agreed to do so. Mrs. Leadman was fully aware of this as the girl hesitated.

"You might as well take it to her, Be'trice. If you don't, I'll send it anyhow, in Sam Smather's mail-bag, when he passes on his mule to-morrow."

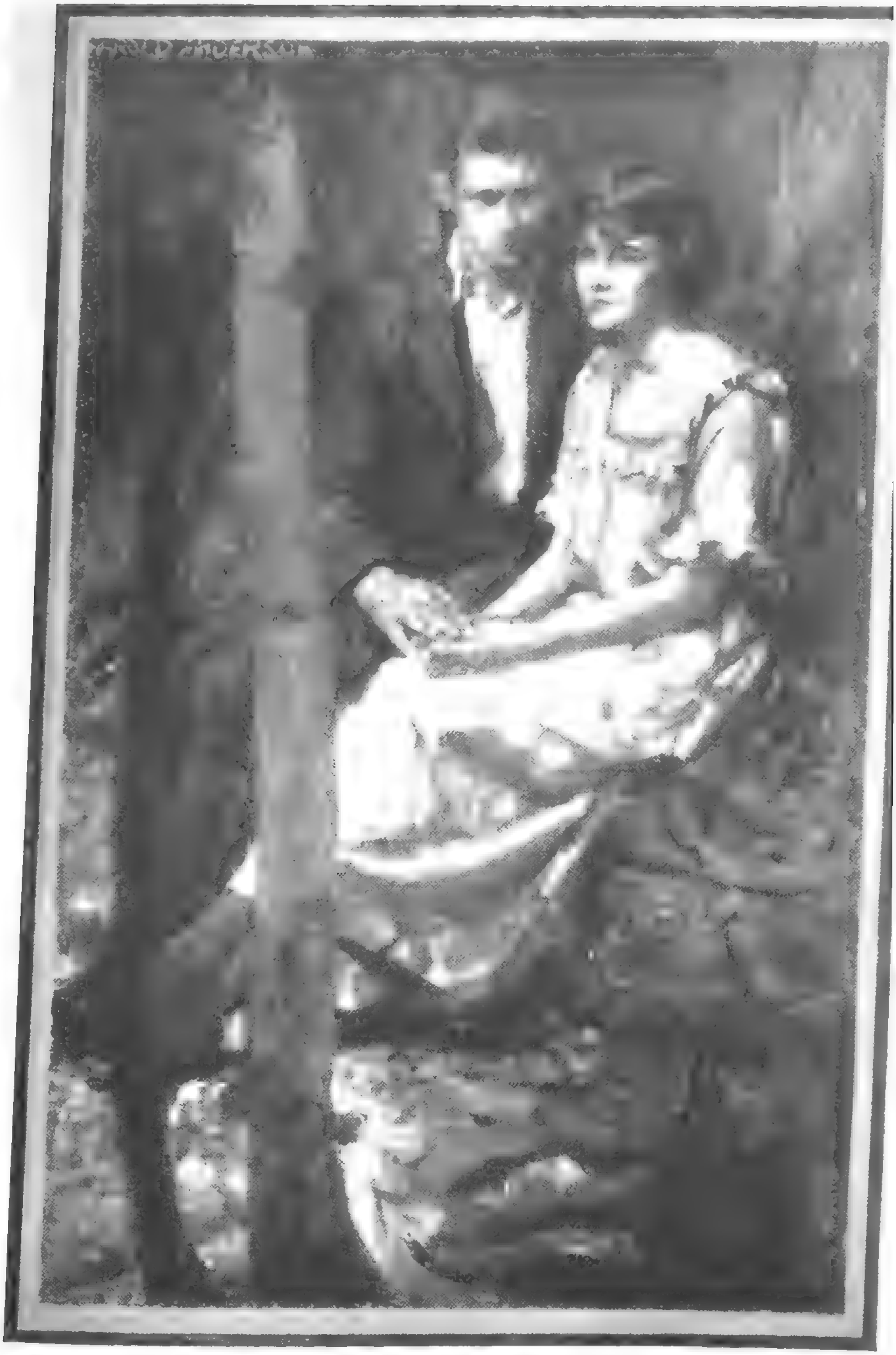
"Mrs. Leadman—" stammered the girl, accepting the trust, with fingers that winced as if thumb-screws had been put on them, "I—I—want to ask you an honest question—"

"Yes, Be'trice?"

"You—you didn't sneak up into the schoolhouse to-day and look out through that crack at the back, did you?"

The answering look was of candid surprise. Whoever was guilty of such spying, if indeed anybody had been, Mrs. Leadman was innocent. Maun, and Be'trice, too, had done her genuine injustice.

"Laws 'a' mercy, child! I took the short path to the school and ran all the way



"Sometimes I feel jist like she's a-spyin' on us, Be'trice. She might tell tales to yo' maw—and yo' maw might tell Brice—" "What would there be to tell?"

'cause I was late. I'm much too busy a woman to take time to peep through cracks."

"I see," murmured the girl.

Mrs. Leadman began to show vexation.

"Now, look here, Be'trice Gormley, and listen to me; I ain't no fool, and I don't have to listen at no cracks—" ("What bad grammar she uses!" thought Be'trice irrelevantly. "And her a teacher, too!") Mrs. Leadman went on: "to see what's goin' on between you and Maun Hunnicut. I don't say you've got any serious intentions—but you know mighty well *he* has—and you ain't doin' anything in partic'lar to discourage him."

"I wouldn't marry him or no other man," said Be'trice.

"I'm not a-sayin' you would if yo' folks will jist leave you alone. I know you're an ambitious girl—even if you have stopped puttin' in all the recess-hour studyin', as I arranged to have you do 'cause you pay yo' board helpin' me mornin's and evenin's about the house. That's what I'm a-writin' to yo' maw about—and she can show you the letter, after all, if she wants to. Tell her I leave that with her. If she wants to keep you by her, she'll do it a lot longer by lettin' you be a teacher than by drivin' you to poverty and a house full of young-uns with one of them Hunnicuts."

Poor Be'trice blushed—a shamed, painful, humiliated red. The manner of stating it had been more forthright than customary to a young girl. And she was at the utter disadvantage of one who is not only in the wrong but has cherished an unworthy suspicion.

"I'll give maw the letter, Mrs. Leadman," she said, turning away meekly. "Thank you for tryin' to help me through. I do want to be smart and self-supportin' and free—and I have got such a long way to go before I get to the last page of that grammar-book and that arithmetic-book. Before I take a school, I want to know every page of 'em by heart."

And still, for some reason, the letter was heavy in her hand. It would be the most influential step from anybody thus far toward helping her to the freedom she longed for. Mrs. Leadman had a convincing way of putting things not unlike her own Grandmaw Hooper. She had the advantage of being able to set them down in black and white in an English totally unlike her spoken word—an English which obeyed all the rules in the grammar-book yet went to its mark. Undoubtedly she had repeated her earlier advice that Be'trice ought either to be let alone or allowed to go away somewhere to school—far enough away to be secure from constant interruption—at least as far as Stoversville.

But this time there would be added argument—overwhelming argument. After all, Maun Hunnicut was wasting a lot of her time.

Mechanically the girl held up the letter and read the careful copy-book characters:

To Mrs. Belinda Gormley. Kindness of Beatrice Vance Gormley.

It seemed to drag her, to weigh her down as she turned into the trail across the mountain and passed into the laurels, out of sight of the sharp-tongued but honest-hearted Mrs. Leadman.

MAUN HUNNICUT had slipped out the schoolhouse door in advance of every one else. His destination was the cluster of houses on Bear Creek which sheltered various broods of Hunnicuts outbranching from the parent stem. He had six miles to go after he passed Mrs. Leadman's house.

The cleared lands in the Bear Creek section differed from those along White Wing. They were paradoxically sunnier and more gaunt. Harsher and cruder hands had ignored the laws of the soil, draining it of its vitality; for here the holdings of the Cherokees were in excess of those of the whites, and the Indian throws away the land as he throws away the game—with inborn prodigal sense of its being limitless.

Before Maun coiled the roadway in loops yellow or loamy or sandy, following the convolutions of the narrow, twisted valley. There were no trails which materially shortened the distance. But he always left the road on the last mile of the way, following by choice the hillside path on the edge of the timber, where the fields climbed the long ridge, stripping it half-way to its top.

This six-mile walk, twice daily, was optional. Ere long it must take place in weather that would be tearing all the leafy coppices yet left into shreds. Had Maun elected to enroll in the Bear Creek school of his own district, he would have merely had to cross a corn field.

But some young man was teaching on Bear Creek this year. He had come from the eastern part of the state. He spoke in an irritating, "proper" fashion, and his attainments also were problematical in Maun's estimation. Whereas everybody knew that Mrs. Leadman had "growed up since she was knee-high with her nose in a book," even if she had never journeyed farther to study than Stoversville and had the good taste to talk like anybody else.

In the parent-house of the Hunnicuts, nobody was left now but Maun himself and his grizzle-haired, wiry old father. The two "batched it," as the phrase went—cooking their own breakfast and eating their other meals at the adjacent homes of the married kinfolks.

The new teacher on Bear Creek had shown a genuine interest, had visited Maun twice, sounded him out and offered him especial supervision. Maun had wavered for a time. But when he learned that Be'trice had started in again this fall, and with Mrs. Leadman, he hesitated no longer.

"Thank ye kindly for your interest, Mr. Levins," he told the new teacher, "but six or seven miles ain't nothin' to walk—an' I reckon what's good enough for as smart a girl as Be'trice Gormley is good enough for me. We can run a race at it, like, bein's as we'll be the only growed-up ones in the classes."

No; he still felt he had made no mistake.

SWINGING along on his homeward way by the edge of the trees, he breathed deep with hope against all the uncertainties before him. The pretty name "Be'trice" was an undercurrent, half sensed, eluding his imagination as she eluded himself, but making rhythmical and lyric his determination to do and to be.

He knew that within him a new soul had shapened somehow out of the slough of Hunnicut shiftlessness or worse. He did not know how it had come about. But he had first become conscious of it more than a year ago in long talks with his mother, when she lay under the patched quilts, dying of cancer.

A half-mile more and he would reach the leaky old frame house, bulging precariously at the walls, literally falling asunder. There must have been a time, he realized, when it was the most pretentious structure on Bear Creek. It had belonged to his mother's people. It had sunk to a symbol of the Hunnicut clan. He would repair that next year. It would have to be with his own unaided hands. His married brothers, with makeshift hovels of their own, ridiculed the idea. As for his father, a dugout in the earth would have suited him as well as any dwelling. Half the time, as it was, he slept by preference at a certain cave where——

But Maun pushed this thought away.

He would repair the homestead that had once been that of his mother's people. That he would do, even if he had to sell or exchange the few timbered acres that would be his allotment when he came of age.

His step quickened. He would love to be at it now!

Below him the vast, sun-soaked trough between the hills was hewn and gashed with gulleys—softened, too, with mellow-scented stubble. There were groups of hay-ricks, fenced in against the cattle and blackened by the equinoctial rains. Shocks of corn fodder dotted many of the fields with shadows royally purple, trailing out behind their sullen browns. Here and there lay acres of blighted late corn that would never be garnered—dead as it stood half grown in the furrows. The poison of a black frost, outlicking swift as a serpent at the beginning of October, had done that.

The drop of acorns and hickory-nuts in the woods above him was like the ticking of a clock, telling off the minutes along the trail of a dream. It made him drowsy. Into his veins crept a sleepy rapture. Be'trice!

If she did not love him, at least she did not hate him. He was now sure of that. It thrilled him to recall how she had bidden him crawl through the bushes and swagger into the school as if they had not been together. She had connived with him as a fellow strategist. Her breath, hot and sweet with intimate excitement, had whispered against his cheek.

Everywhere along his path the Michaelmas daisies and the bleeding-heart! His steps turned tuneful.

"Oh, I love somebody; I do, I do;
I love somebody; I do—
And I ain't a-going to te-ell; I ain't, I ain't;
I ain't a-goin' to te-ell; I ain't——"

He had the fancy to stop and gather sprays of the bleeding-heart from a rock outcropping at his right at about the height of his shoulders. The path tipped sharply round this rock.

"And I ain't a-goin' to te-ell; I ain't——"

The song dropped to a silence. On a smooth-hewn stump of felled chestnut sat Brice Gormley. He made as if to be preoccupied, wiping the lock and barrel of his gun. But Maun was not deceived by that. With the certainty of divination, he knew all at once that it had not been Mrs. Leadman's eyes that had peered out at him and Be'trice. He knew that this meeting was no accident.

"EVENIN', Brice," faltered Maun.

Unconsciously his fingers relaxed their hold on the sprays of bleeding-heart. They fell on the riotous golden cushions of leaves under his feet.

"Evenin'," grunted Brice, without looking up. He went on polishing the mechanism of his rifle with the utmost conscientiousness, using a soft dry moss gathered from the rock which had borne the bleeding-heart. Maun passed on along the path.

"Maun—Maun Hunnicut!" Brice was calling him back as if in laconic afterthought. "Would ye mind waitin' a minute, Maun? There's something I want to show ye. It won't take long."

Maun retraced his steps. What else was there to do?

"I notice yo' daddy's been a-roundin' up his hogs," said Brice.

"I heard some of 'em mention it," said Maun. "I ain't helped much in the farmwork since fodder-pullin'. I'm in school, ye know. Saturdays I clerk in Smather's store over to Stoversville."

"I notice yo' pappy's penned a few of 'em for fattenin' at the top of this ridge." Brice made gesture indicating the direction.

And now Maun's heart truly sank within him. What had the old man been up to this time?

"I heered 'em sayin' something about it. I ain't never been up to look at 'em. Pappy and Sam and Abe and Bill always rounds up their hogs together."

He strove to speak carelessly. But, try as he would, he could not meet Brice's eye. What new mischief had they all been up to—Pappy Hunnicut, and Sam and Abe and Bill, true sons of their father?

Brice droned on:

"The mast's good on this hill—and it's reservation timber—free rangin' for everybody. I wish it wasn't nine miles away from the Hooper farm. I'd pen two or three of ourn thar, too."

"Well, I'll be a-goin' on," said Maun.

"What's yo' hurry? Ye haven't seen the hogs, ye say? Two or three of 'em's mighty fine hogs. Yo' daddy's got reason to be proud of ownin' 'em."

Maun had no reply for this.

"I 'lowed as we might climb up together and take a shy at 'em. We might get a shot at a squirrel on the way. They say ye can kill a squirrel, Maun, by just flingin' a stone. They say ye can aim nigher with a stone than the average man with a bullet. I could, too—when I was young, like ye."

Too friendly by far! The Hunnicut family record precluded such friendliness. That was the lad's tragedy, which he must bear stoically and silently. He could not be faithless to his own—and to admit even to himself some of the things attributed to his father and his brothers would have been treachery. Nobody could prove these things—he as little as anybody. They kept the gravest of them from him—especially since the death of his mother.

Brice was leading the way up the hill. They had to stoop constantly under half-naked saplings. Their feet plowed the fallen leaves. Brice was unwontedly talkative.

"It's a funny thing, Maun, that ye can take time this year to go to school—at an age when most young men wants to be gettin' married."

"Maw asked me to try to get an education—to try to make something out of myself—last year—before she died."

The reply disarmed the older man for the moment. He had intended to add some caustic utterance about how the other male Hunnicuts must miss Maun's assistance at the still in Beaver Cove where they made blockade whisky. He left that unsaid.

They were nearing the pen, a quarter-acre of ground fenced in with rails.

"I 'lowed as ye ought to see 'em yerself, bein's they're the property of yo' family. Ye don't take enough interest, Maun. Ye ain't loyal enough to yer own. Pig!" he called, imitating the grunt of the animal in his intonation of the word. "Pig!"

Half a dozen hogs came running from the farther corner where the last sunlight of day streamed down through the branches of an old oak. Brice scattered a handful of corn from his pocket and vaulted the snake fence. He caught the largest and finest of the hogs by its neck. It set up a tremendous squealing, but Brice held its ear as calmly as if it had been inanimate.

"That's yo' pappy's crop-mark all right, ain't it, Maun?"

"Whose else would it be, Brice?"

"Thar's jist one thing wrong, Maun. I've got a little secret mark of my own that I put on all my hogs afore they're yearlin's. It's something nobody 'ud take any notice on. If ye'll jist jump over that fence, I'll show it to ye."

He held the deafeningly shrieking pig about the body with viselike arm and folded back the ear. A tiny mark—mere dots, like the faint scar of some insignificant wound—was revealed. It might have been a brand-mark. It looked more like a dog-bite.

"Ye see yo' daddy's croppin' was cut too late, Maun. This happens to be my hog. Two of them others is mine, too. I can catch 'em and show 'em to ye if ye insist."

Brice had been so careless as to set his loaded rifle in the "V" of the fence. All the spirit within Maun blazed up at the coldly calculated insult. He was between Brice and the fence. He could seize the weapon by merely reaching out his right hand. He was wrenched as with a sudden voltage from a battery. He could make Brice eat his words. Then, as quickly, he remembered. This was Be'trice's brother—her own blood-brother.

"Of course, Brice, I know ye *think* it's yourn. Any hog-chasin' hound might 'a' made that little scar. But you wouldn't lie, I know, about *believin'* ye put it thar."

"I wouldn't!" said Brice, releasing the hog and standing like a sentinel. "Hoopers don't!"

Angry passion had died from the lad's face. His voice was so low as to be nearly inaudible, but it pleaded.

"This is one of them cases, Brice, where a man might easy be mistaken. Ye oughtn't to claim anything like that when ye can't be certain. I happen to know that hog. I seen it round here since it was jist a shoat."

Brice had revaulted the fence and taken up his gun. He did not face the boy, but he spoke with dry grimness.

"Sure ye've seen it, Maun! She's one of them I lost last time there was a fire in the woods, three year ago. I done had my suspicions they wasn't all burned up. I done had my suspicions, too, that there's more'n Indians round here that'll set fire to the trees when there's something to get by a-doin' it. If it came to it, I could prove ownership of them hogs in the Stoversville court-house, but we won't bother about 'em any more. Ye can tell yo' pappy I hereby and herewith present 'em to him, and nothin' never said to nobody. I reckon you-all needs bacon worse'n the Hoopers."

Maun climbed the fence slowly and turned away. His head was bowed. His slender body was limp with dejection.

"Well, I'll be a-goin', Brice."

"Jist one word more Maun—then I'll quit detainin' ye. I seen ye with Be'trice to-day. I don't like spyin', but sometimes a man's got to—to be certain of what he's been suspicionin'. There's a good school on Bear Creek, and ye belong thar—ye don't live in the White Wing district. Be'trice wants an education as bad as ye do. I got that much. If you don't want to stand in her way, ye'll do yo' sums somewhere else. To be fair with ye—either you quits Mrs. Leadman's school or she does."

"I'll be a-goin' now," said Maun.

"Good-by, Maun," said Brice.

BE'TRICE was what is known on White Wing as a "peart-steppin' gal." She made the three miles of steep climbing and precipitous descending to her home in less than an hour. She came down into the autumnal glory of White Wing Valley as if with a little relaxing flutter of wings that had soared.

Something in the tang of the air as she mounted the heights had relieved the weight at her heart. She had paused at the topmost point where the trail tumbled below her, headlong as a tiny thread of cataract. The touch of Maun's fingers seeking her own came back to her—that palpitant, quick instant of contact ere she had snatched her hand away. All at once she had had a strange feeling of superfluity in the fettering of her feet by the earth. It seemed absurd to have to toil downward step by step.

A mere outstretching of the arms, a lifting of the bosom, a volition of the will, and she could fly from this mountain—surely! She could leap out over the tree-tops below her and descend in a long, ecstatic curve to the doorway of the Hooper cabin. The touch of Maun's finger—it had never lingered before like this—never before been an apotheosis!

SHE came up demurely enough to the covered open room. Her grandmother and her mother sat outside it now. They had let the fire inside die down to embers.

There was no greeting as Be'trice approached them. One never says "Howdy?" to one's nearest of kin on White Wing, except after long absences. The girl entered the house with a silent nod. She busied herself at once with preliminaries to supper-getting.

She came outside after a time, with a dish-pan of apples which she began to pare in her lap, after tilting her chair luxuriously, far back against the logs of the kitchen wing.

Granny Hooper made the first comment.

"So ye took a notion ye'd come home over Saturday and Sunday, did ye?"

"I took no such notion," said Be'trice, paring with slight acceleration of speed. "Maw sent word to me by Brice. I reckoned as I'd find her a-lyin' flat on the bed."

"I had an awful spell of my bad breathin' in the night," said Mrs. Gormley weakly. "I woke Brice up, lookin' for the hartshorn. It was his notion that I needed ye—more'n mine."

"Brice jist kain't tend to his own affairs," said Granny Hooper.

Silence from Mrs. Gormley. Inherent stoicism before injustice, inversely matching her lack of endurance in physical ill-being, was working against her impulse to defend herself.

"I told him not to," she murmured at last.

Almost immediately she repented this disloyalty to her only living son—the pride of her heart.

"But he knowed I wanted her. Brice is the only human alive that ever takes any thought on me. I jist kain't hold out, cookin' and washin' and mendin' for them three men! It's done wore me out."

Every ache and pain came rushing upon her at her subconscious summons. The front rungs of her chair hit the earth with a jolt. She leaned forward, propping her left elbow on her knees, holding her cheek in her outstretched fingers.

"Them teeth!" she moaned. "Some day I'll be a fallin' right down in my tracks!"

"I see," said Be'trice.

There was another long silence, broken only by the sound of her paring-knife.

After a while, she rose to carry the pared apples back to the kitchen.

"Here's a letter Mis' Leadman sent you," she announced. "She says you can show it to me or not, accordin' as you decide. I'm goin' up into the ax-field now, to dig some snakeroot and make you a tea."

When Be'trice was gone, Granny Hooper and her daughter spelled out and discussed the letter. Mrs. Gormley rocked her body dolefully.

"She says we're a-drivin' Be'trice right toward that Hunnicut boy. It 'ud kill me if Be'trice was to run away and marry a Hunnicut. That 'ud jist be the last straw."

"It's a shame the gal's got to run away if she's to git him," growled Granny Hooper. "There ain't nothin' wrong with Maun."

"Them Hunnicuts! Whisky-makers and timber-burners and hog-thieves!" wailed Mrs. Gormley. "Oh, Law me! If we keep her home, we drive her to him. Yet, when she's in school, she sees him ever' day."

"Like bein' 'twixt the polecat and the yaller-jacket's nest, hey?" Granny Hooper's eyes were twinkling. "One reason why I go out lookin' for kindlin'-limbs," she went on, "is 'cause I run into people on the road. I hunt kindlin'-boughs to git some notion of what's goin' on in the world—bein's as we Hoopers are so superior that nobody but old fogies ever visits us——"

"Oh, Law me! Whisky-makers and hog-thieves and——"

"Good Lord, B'lindy; ye grunt a body deef and dumb! I'm a-tryin' to git my say said, and I kain't keep up my breath through yo' gruntin'. Ye fair outwind me. I'm a-tryin' to tell ye that one Sunday, not long ago, I walked clean to the top of the hill, as far as the pine-turn—and thar, all to onct, jist like the ground had opened to let him out, stood this boy Maun—Maun Hunnicut—all growed up to be a man."

"Jist like a Hunnicut—to rise out o' the ground like that. He was on *some* devilment!"

"I ain't a-sayin' what he was on. Time

was when Brice held the best record for big-game huntin' of any man in the county. This Hunnicut child could give him a few pointers now'days—and would, too—if Brice would jist treat him like a human bein'. He's got the scentin' sense, and the gift of dodgin'—jist like a Cherokee."

"He comes by them faculties honest," snuffed Mrs. Gormley, sitting erect. "Hunnicuts needs 'em in their business."

"I'd be ashamed, B'lindy! That poor child, as kain't help what he come from! I made him talk to me. He was mistrustin' at first—but I drawed him out. He's a good boy, I tell ye, B'lindy—a sweet boy. He made me think of our own little Gus that they stole and took to France——"

A trembling shuddered through the gaunt body of the younger mother. This was the one blow of the many dealt her by destiny for which she would never forgive Providence. When she said her prayers at night, she remembered it, wondering if her piety veiled her true feelings from the Almighty.

"But he's got a heap more hard sense than our Gus had," added Granny Hooper, with grim regard for facts. "Poor Gus was mighty gentle, but ye know as well as I do, B'lindy, he never did have much sense. Them kind's missed when they're gone, but they're better off."

"My baby boy!" Mrs. Gormley's eyes became mercifully wet. On the rare occasion when she could weep streaming tears like this, it helped her. "My baby boy—my baby!" she sobbed.

"No, B'lindy; don't say that. He ain't yo' baby. Be'trice was borned to ye last—and ye don't half appreciate how hard the little thing's strivin' to do whatever's best. Dry yo' eyes, B'lindy. Here she comes now, with her arms all full o' snakeroot to make a tea for ye."

BE'TRICE did not ask to see Mrs. Leadman's letter, deeming herself apprized already of its contents.

To her surprise, her mother advised, even insisted, that she return to Mrs. Leadman's home and to her school on Monday. The girl had not expected the letter to be so promptly efficacious.

Smart woman—Mrs. Leadman! There had been some mysterious consultation with Brice, following which Mrs. Gormley had shown utter change of feeling.

But Be'trice refused pointblank to go.

"I don't intend to budge from here, maw, until I'm sure you won't send for me again. I won't move from this kitchen until you make Brice take you to Stoversville and get Dr. Bryson to draw out some of them old teeth."

Obediently, next morning, Mrs. Gormley crossed Atoah Mountain to Stoversville in the farm-wagon, and returned late at night with very sore gums but with a strange, relieved feeling as if festering thorns had been drawn from a score of ganglionic nerve-centers.

"Ye'll go back to school now, Be'trice," she pleaded. "I ain't felt so strong in twenty year."

But Be'trice stayed home until Monday, nine days after Mrs. Leadman had sent her back.

She reached the schoolhouse before Mrs. Leadman on the crisp, clean November morning. The weather had been a marvel. Everybody talked of it. It had not rained for weeks. Her eagerness as she entered the door was beyond her comprehension. It seemed as if it would suffocate her.

Maun was not yet there. He had a long way to come, and she was very early. She was glad he would be later than ordinarily. It gave her time to compose herself.

All morning she wondered. There was no Maun to keep her company in Mrs. Leadman's "advanced" arithmetic and grammar.

By the noon dismissal she could stand it no longer.

"What d'you reckon's a-keepin' Maun," she asked Mrs. Leadman very offhandedly.

"He ain't with us any more. Didn't Brice tell you? There's nothin' left to pester you now, Be'trice. Maun's started in with that Mr. Levins at the Bear Creek school. Nobody's goin' to bother you any more."

"I see," said Be'trice.

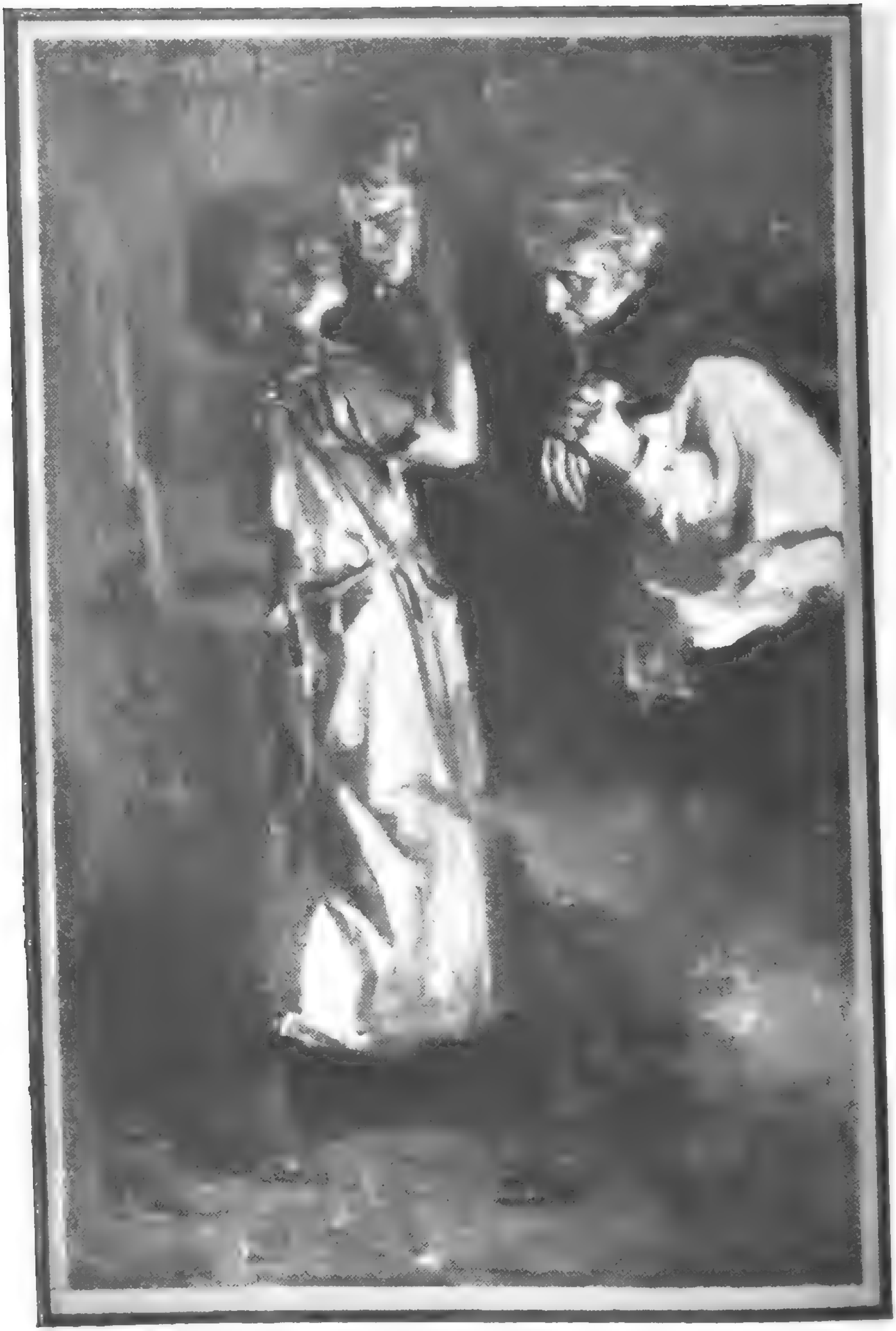
"And yo' maw ain't goin' to send fer you 'till the end of the term, even if she takes in hired help. Everything's straightenin' out, Be'trice."

"Yes'm. I mean—thank you, ma'am. I ought to be a thousand times obliged to you, ma'am."

Mrs. Leadman eyed her keenly.

"I reckon, though, you'd better come home to dinner with me to-day instead of eatin' out of yo' pail. I reckon it'll be kind o' lonesome like—the first day."

Everybody's Magazine, December, 1922



Be'trice reached them first. Her arms went protectingly about Maun, sharing his weight with Granny Hooper. No—he would not die!

"That's mighty thoughtful of you, Mrs. Leadman. I'd like to help you get dinner ever' day from now on, if you don't mind. Seems like I cook so much at home it's jist second nature."

She set her slender shoulders erectly and managed to smile.

So Maun had come back at her at last! The worm had turned, as the saying went. Well, he should never know from any living soul that she was even conscious of his absence. And now, more than ever, she was sure she would never have married him, even if he'd been the best man on the earth instead of an ornery Hunnicut.

BRICE brought news before the week was out. He stopped at Mrs. Leadman's at dinner-time on Friday. There had been a fire in the bone-dry tangles above the ax-field. It might easily have spread to the hemlock trees above the old Hooper burying-place, but Lishey and Joe and himself had caught it in time and dug round it and stamped it out.

Brice had no theories. He "knowed jist as well who'd been tryin' that old trick as if he'd seen it with his own eyes." He and the boys had put in a day rounding up their hogs, and a litter of pigs was missing from one old sow. He'd also found foot-tracks along the creek below the pine-turn. He refused to say whose foot-tracks they were; but "they wasn't no Indian foot-tracks."

But the foot-tracks, the fire in the brush and the probable stealing of the litter were just now of minor importance. A big bear was at large in the neighborhood. Somebody had a chance to get it if the Indians didn't get ahead of somebody. Perhaps it was one of those that had broken the stockade and escaped last year from the game-preserve of Mr. Harris, of New York, way out under the Newton Bald. Maybe the Indians hadn't killed off all that largess yet?

However that might be, this bear had so long and so successfully eluded pursuit that it had grown bold. It must have been as near to the Hooper place, for instance, as the pine-turn, at the top of the woods beyond the farm. Evidences were discoverable.

Brice meant to round up the bear if it took himself and Lishey and Joe a week to do it. The catching of the hog-thief red-handed would be merely incidental to the bigger vigil. Brice believed he still held the white man's record in the county for bear-killing. But it had been seven years now——

When Be'trice heard all this, she announced that she would return home that day, for over the week-end, anyhow. She was sure they needed her at home—what with hog-thieves, and forest fires, and fierce bears roaming at large. The Sunday festivities, with two preachings in the schoolhouse and all the girls of White Wing present in their prettiest dresses and all the boys in their mail-order clothes, could be left out. She felt, somehow, an apathy of late about all such things.

Also, her heart misgave her in the matter of Brice's sinister certitude about the tracks in the creek loam below the pine-turn. He had no fears on the score of Maun. But she had heard too much talk in bygone times to feel equally reassured about his family. And the possibility of Hunnicut blood on Hooper or Gormley hands——

That would seal the barrier forever. It was sealed already, of course. Maun's courage had given out quicker than her own. He had just as good as deserted her—had left her high and dry in Mrs. Leadman's school.

Well, she did not miss him. She was glad he was gone, leaving her free of perplexities.

And yet—Brice's rifle must never be aimed at a Hunnicut, if they stole all the hogs on the ranges.

"No need for ye to come home at all, Be'trice," Brice insisted. "I'll be a-goin' now."

"If you get home before I do," said Be'trice, "tell maw I'll be at the house jist as soon after school to-day as the trail can fetch me."

The flicker of a single star worried its way through clouds that massed and piled themselves like avalanches above the soft night. It searched out the blur of a figure moving, with a sort of slow oscillation, down the slope of the old ax-field, where the recent fire had left a charred area that drank up the dimness.

On a rock overlooking the field like an observation platform, outjutting from the ridge behind it, the ashes of a camp-fire had gone cold. Three men lay lazily on the rock, flat on their stomachs, their heads propped on their elbows. Through the tangle of half-stripped boughs, their line of vision went straight to the burnt openness amid briers and bushes, where, a few days earlier, they had ditched the ground round the flames. They watched the progress of the blur across the burned space. One of the tired, snoring dogs stirred awake.

"Shut up thar!" hissed Brice Gormley to the hound. "We ain't complainin' yet."

The dog resumed its interrupted dreams in a sorely needed repose.

HAD Brice and Lishey and Joe been near enough, they might have relented at seeing how the star's dim flicker touched the glint in a pair of brown eyes—wide-open eyes—clear as a child's. Their owner was weary to exhaustion. He walked backward much of the time, and with a limp. Untoward things had been his portion this night. But the glint was one of satisfaction, deep and grateful. A little more patience, a little more endurance and the work he had set for himself would be over. He clucked throatily and flung a handful of corn.

"Pig!" he grunted, stepping backward yet another pace. For nine long miles through the precipitous forests he had been doing this.

Two hogs were at his feet, crunching the corn with a noise like the grinding of a stone mortar under a pestle. Where was the third? They were forever getting separated like this.

"Pig!" he called more urgently, and, lighting a wisp of straw with a match, held it far out from him, to illuminate the charred, sloping heath.

The missing pig was located many yards away. Corn in extra quantity was flung for its especial alluring. The wisp went out in a sudden gust of wind that blew down an instant of blackness. Even the flicker of the insistent star was gone.

The straw flame had lasted long enough, however, to identify the oscillating blur to the watchers steeped in their seeming apathy on the rock.

"Well, I'll be dog-goned!" muttered Brice, never shifting his pose. "I knowed the old daddy was a meaner skunk than the devil wants him to be. But I didn't 'low it 'ud be the kid himself we was goin' to catch at this family stealin' job. Somehow, I jist nat'ally couldn't suspicion young Maun."

"He ain't set no fires yet," whispered Lishey. "Maybe he's heard us."

"Like father like son," mused Brice to himself.

"Sha'in't we go after him now?" said Joe, holding his flat palm out from his cheek to cut off the telegraphy of wind. "We'd go scot-free in court if we follered him up and shot him dead."

"Nothin' like that," drawled Brice. "He won't set no fires. He ain't got the spunk. He'll lead them hogs out along the road, by the creek and up to the pine-turn. He'll take the open trail that leads out from thar. Give him all his rope."

Maun had to feel his way again as he descended into the sassafras, blackberry and thorn-bushes from whence he would emerge into the open road. A spiked branch ripped across his face. His fingers, touching his cheek, felt the slipperiness of blood. He smiled. It was a tougher job than anybody would think—this getting the three hogs over the mountains in the secrecy of night.

He had had one or two accidents worse than this. At the top of Sneed's cow-slide, for instance, he had felt a more ominous slipperiness under his feet than any wound from a brier. He had heard, as if right against his ear-drum, that vibration like the vindictive shaking of dry peas in a gourd. He had jumped back in the ultimate night horror known to the mountaineer, jumped back from what he knew to be the coiled strike that had barely missed the thin overalls above the line of his boots.

There had not been level ground behind him when he jumped back. There had been a pit of loose rocks. He had felt he could not move at first, so agonizing was the twisting of his ankle. From that episode on, a constant ringing in his ears had blurred his usual sensitiveness to elusive scents and sounds. The rattlesnake had glided away.

That was why he smiled now when the thorn tore his cheek—so much worse were the things through which he had come safely. And though he limped painfully and his face and hands were bloody, his spirits were mounting. Dumb, inanimate forces of the night had flayed and beaten him as he toiled up and down the trails. But he had managed somehow to pull through.

He came at last to the open road. His troubles were nearly over.

"Pig!" he called, with the persuasiveness of Circe herself.

The great problem was to get the hogs by the Hooper fodder fields, where the fencing was bad, on into the tight enclosure about the log barn, where they could do no damage. Once he had them safe in the barnyard, he would wake up Brice and the boys. And though they might greet him with curses at first, they would quickly relent.

He had great news for them.

Some of the Cherokees had worked out the checkmating of the bear this very night. Maun knew more of their language than they suspected. He had their own gift of keeping himself invisible. He had shadowed two of them this evening and listened.

If he could help Brice get that bear away from the Indians—after restoring the three hogs Brice believed to be his own, stolen three years ago— But he dared promise himself nothing. Surely, however, it must at least make a difference.

He passed, after what seemed interminable pain, the Hooper cabin. It was wrapped in the silence of the hour when sleep is heaviest. But the hogs kept nosing for openings in the fence of the fodder fields, They had to be reassembled again and again. He must be sparing of his corn, too. He had just a little left.

Then all at once he realized that he had failed. The hogs had found crevices into the stubble about the fodder, and neither corn nor coaxing could call them out. If he turned back to the house now and wakened Brice and the two Hooper boys, he would get but curses for his stupidity. That much was plain.

He must give it up. The Indians would get the bear without competition. Well, he couldn't have helped Brice much, anyhow. He had no head any more. Brice would find the pigs in the morning—safe back after three years, and the damage they could do would be but slight.

Wearily he limped by the last corner of the Hooper fields, where stood the log barn. The hemlock woods where the road mounted steeply toward the pine-turn swallowed him up. He had brought Brice back his hogs. But the real hope which had lightened his task had gone dark, and the light in his heart had gone dead.

Long before this, the three men on the rock above the ax-field had risen from their prone positions.

"All the rope he wants!" commanded Brice. "Keep well inside the fields and shadder him along the White Wing road. Joe, ye watch at the fur end. I'll take the middle. Lishey, ye go and fetch Be'trice out—to see with her own eyes what kind of a feller she's been moonin' about."

"Sha'in't we catch him and bind him and bring him in?" suggested Joe. "Sha'in't we jist tickle his sides with a little bird-shot, kind of?"

"Ye always was a fool, Joe—ye and pore Gus, who thought South Ca'lina was France." Brice drawled a truth repeated too often to give the slightest offense. "Ye keep them dogs quiet," he added nonchalantly. "The night's goin' to be blacker than the mouth of hell—and there's a bear-trap right where he'll turn off at the pine-turn. I sot it myself—afore sundown."

SOMETIME after midnight that night, Be'trice was roused from a restless sleep in the small bed at the foot of the big one shared by her mother and grandmother.

The boys, as she understood, had taken to the woods with their guns after supper. They planned to camp out all night at what seemed the most strategical point indicated by conflicting stories of the depredations of the bear.

She woke with a start. Lishey Hooper was bending over her.

"Git on yo' clothes, Be'trice," he whispered. "Don't wake maw and grandmaw. Brice is waitin' for ye inside the field by the road. He's got something to show ye."

He tiptoed out. She dressed herself swiftly and soundlessly. She thought she heard her grandmother stir and say something to her as she stepped outside the house, but she could not stop to make sure. Lishey was waiting for her. He led the way into the field.

The night was almost completely dark. Now and then a star sent its ray through a driven rush of clouds. A wind had risen. The creek roared louder than wontedly.

"Dodge round the fodder-stacks," directed Lishey. "Keep out of sight."

He whispered in her ear, as they darted from corn-shock to fenced hay-rick:

"Brice has been tipped off by Mrs. Leadman that ye're sulkin' and unhappy over Maun Hunnicut. He's goin' to show ye something that'll cure ye forever of that feelin'. He's waitin' over thar by that fence.

Creep over to him and keep out of sight of the road."

A chill went through her. She told herself it could not be so bad. Perhaps old man Hunnicut—or some of them no-'count sons—but, as Granny Hooper often said, how could Maun help what he come from?

THE night was growing inkily dark. She half crept, half crawled in the direction indicated by Lishey.

Yet, when she was very near Brice as he kneeled before the hedge of thicket which grew along the fence, she could make out the gleam of his eyes which seemed to pierce the darkness—half angry, half triumphant.

Some one was out on the road, clucking to hogs, urging them on, calling softly: "Pig! Pig!"

There were gentle expostulations—as though the plunder were stubborn. There was the pelting scatter of handfuls of corn clicking through the wind like flings of rain.

A giddiness seized her. She was glad she crouched, half prone. Had she been standing, she felt she would have fallen. The voice that called: "Pig! Pig!" was the soft voice of Maun. Then the wind rose like a melancholy yodel, cutting it off. Along the creek and on the hill was the crack of harried boughs.

The wind died again. The voice was gone. The night was silent, save for the creek, which seemed to rest, too, with the resting of the wind.

"He's out of hearin' by now."

The remark was addressed by Brice to Lishey. Be'trice heard the wind awash in the gulch of a divide in the hill behind them.

It had grown so pitchy black that she had to guide herself back toward the house by reaching out with her hand to the thicket along the fence.

All three were returning with her. Joe had joined the other two as if conjured out of the night. Be'trice heard them confer. They had forgotten her. She stopped still to listen.

"He passed right by the fur end of the field whar ye stationed me," Joe was saying to Brice. "It was all I could do to keep them dogs quiet—or keep my hand off'n my trigger——"

"No need of any shootin' or such," interrupted Brice. "He'll get his'n."

"He's missed gettin' them hogs, anyhow," chuckled Joe. "They got away from him off into the stubble— Thar's one now!"

A low, contented animal's grunt could be heard close at hand.

"He's at the pine-turn by now—thinkin' they're still a-follerin', I reckon. He'll take the trail that branches off from thar. That's all right. Sometimes when ye can't catch a bear, ye can catch a thief."

She came up behind them as they reached the yard of the house together.

Suddenly, a narrow crimson flare illumined the path of the corn-stacks and the hay-ricks, like the outstreaming of a weak red search-light. Outlined in a stealthy flickering, Be'trice saw the silhouettes of her kinsmen against the logs of the dwelling.

There was a faint roar from the hill of the pine-turn. It was blended and blotted by another rising of the wind. A long flame leaped out against the sky-line, where the road mounted the height.

Brice ripped out a terrible oath. He broke his imprecations midway with a pealing, raucous laugh. He had noted Be'trice cowering near them.

"Hunnicut tricks to the last! Fired the woods, has he?" He was speaking at her now rather than to the men. "But there's a bear-trap right at the openin' of that trail he'll take. I set it to-day. He'll get his'n."

"You don't mean," faltered the girl, "you don't mean—that you'll let him get caught in the bear-trap and *burned alive*—you *can't* mean that, surely, Brice?"

The narrow red flicker was broadening slowly to a pervasive glare. His harsh laugh seemed to intensify the luridness as her gaze strained wildly toward the far-away flames. She thought the fields looked sticky and oily, as if soaked in blood mixed with phosphorous.

"In the trap—sure! In his own trap. Serves him right—stealer of hogs and stealer of hearts!"

One long cry went from her.

"Granny! Grandmaw!" she shrieked. "Oh, Granny Hooper, wake up—wake up!"

She fell headlong across the threshold.

Mrs. Gormley came rushing out—a gray, haggard figure, half dressed, with her hair in wisps about her face.

She had wakened at the first murmur of voices to find Granny Hooper's place empty and cold at her side. She had drawn on some of her clothes in a slow, stupefied terror, listening to the wind. Now, prone across the door-sill, she beheld her daughter, dying, as she firmly believed. She saw the red-lighted fields and the distant flames pouring black smoke, fanned by the winds into the peak of heaven. The curse of a vengeful Jehovah!

Judgment was upon her at last. Judgment for her secret bitterness with God about that stealing of Gus and taking him to France. The end of all things was upon her now.

But Be'trice had not even swooned. She had tripped and fallen. She was up in a moment.

"Granny Hooper!" she called and, turning, ran toward the roadway. "Foller me—oh, help me, Granny Hooper! We've got to save him, Granny Hooper—maw—Lishey—Joe—!"

She called their names—all their names but Brice's—in hysteria, one after another, as she ran in the face of the wind toward the hill of flames, stumbling, falling, picking herself up again.

"We've got to save him! In spite of Brice, we've got to save him—Granny Hooper—maw—Lishey—Joe!"

THE men came after her. One or another of them laid a hand on her arm, urging her back to the house. Maybe Maun hadn't been caught by the trap—and, anyhow, it was too late. Nothing short of the rain that might come any moment could stop that fire in the pines. She tore herself from their grasp.

They ran with her, breathless and silent. They began to feel a shamed depression at the cruelty being perpetrated—a sense of connivance—even through their sense of plain justice meted out to one who was guilty.

Hard by the end of the fields, far down the road, they made out a figure bent beneath a burden.

Granny Hooper's figure. But the burden she bore was not, this time, a bough for the kindling of the warmth on the hearth. It was a human burden. It staggered on its feet, half dragged along by the strength of her withered arms.

Be'trice reached them first.

She made no further outcry. Her arms went protectingly about Maun, sharing his weight with Granny Hooper. No—he would not die! She and Grandmaw Hooper would never let him die!

But he did not seem to realize any presence save that one which had loosened the fangs of the trap and dragged him dauntlessly through the burning woods.

Be'trice heard Maun's words repeated in Granny Hooper's ear—like something learned by rote.

"Tell Brice I brought back his hogs—tell him he *can get that bear*—the Indians has set fire to the woods—to drive it down t'other side the creek. Pappy and Sam and Abe and Bill ain't stole no hogs in three year—since mother was tuk mortal sick. They ain't even stole no whisky—since she died. Pappy axed me to bring back them hogs when nobody was a-lookin'—and to help Brice get that bear—if Brice 'ud let me. Tell Be'trice—" He had repeated his ritual to his last conscious breath.

The men caught him from Be'trice's weakening arms as his dead weight jostled against Granny Hooper's shoulder. Brice lifted the limp body, shoving the others aside, and bore it with long strides, far ahead of them all, on toward the house.

Granny Hooper quickened her pace and began to boast.

"I pried open that 'ere fanged trap with them two hands! There's young men of twenty-five as couldn't 'a' done it. I seen that trap when I walked as fur as the pine-turn for kindlin' afore supper. I suspicioned the way things was the minute Lishey waked up Be'trice."

She rambled on with mounting triumph at her feat of superstrength.

"The trap's broke that pore boy's leg, and gouged it up worse'n a pitchfork, and he's drippin' blood as hard as them clouds will be drippin' rain on us if we don't hurry. But it'll all dry to-morrow—blood and rain—and put out that 'ere fire. I tell ye it was right on top of us. Both of us is scorched and toasted up a pow'ful spell. But I reckon as we ain't neither of us dead for a long time yit."

We take pleasure in announcing that other stories by Mr. Olmsted are scheduled for early issues of EVERYBODY'S.

THE BELOVED PAWN

A Big, Human Drama of the Great Lakes

Eve Eldred Is Forced to Take a Step That Means Great Peril. David MacKinnon Will Not Learn His Lesson, and King Norman Finds His Realm in Complete Chaos

By Harold Titus

Author of "Foraker's Folly"

Illustrations by Stockton Mulford

Begin this serial with any instalment. The story is here up to this issue.

IT WAS surely fate that drove David MacKinnon in his little trading hooker to seek shelter in the harbor of Garden Island in Lake Michigan on the night of a spring storm, for it was the very place he had been warned to keep away from—the place where his father had come to a tragic end, his boat driven on the rocks through the treachery of "King Norman" Eldred, who changed the beacons that marked the narrow channel.

The island was Eldred's realm. Here he lived with his daughter Eve, now in the years of early womanhood, and held despotic sway over the rough men that helped him with his fishing industry. Eve was all the world to him. He had taught her to fear the men and kept her to himself, resenting strongly the interest taken in her by Jenny Borden, wife of the lighthouse keeper on near-by Squaw Island. So the girl was quite alone and had no companion but her dog. Her chief duty was tending the island store which her father had established. The arrival of David wakened new interests. He was different from the other men, and she believed that he would be a friend—but he would leave in a day or two. Perhaps this was just as well, for her father's hostility toward the lad was only too evident.

The night before his departure, David came into the store, and found Eve repelling the unwelcome advances of Jean Mosseau, a French-Canadian. David thrashed the fellow and threw him out. Eldred, when he learned what had occurred, set out to find Mosseau, and later Eve took David into the house to show him a picture of her mother. Here she told him of her life and wretched loneliness, and warned him against her father, who wouldn't stop at anything if he knew what she had told him.

As they talked, a light from the harbor came through the window. David rushed out, turning one searching, accusing look on the girl. There at the dock, his hooker, the *Annabelle*, was a mass of flames. Had Eve, by detaining him at the house, been a party to a dastardly deed?

Norman Eldred left his house to hunt Jean Mosseau and make him pay for his treatment of Eve, but outside he paused

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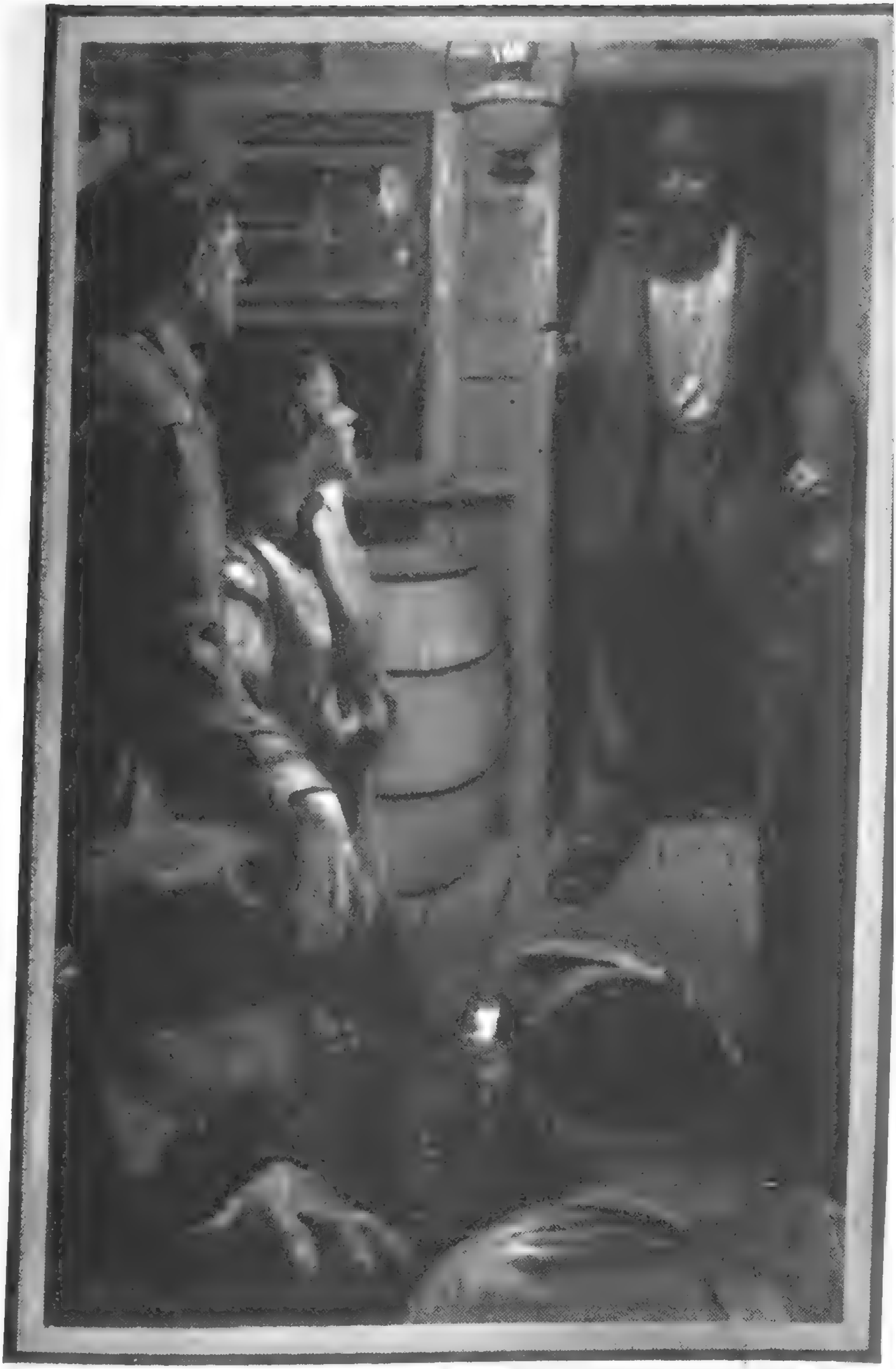


The hand with the pistol whipped upward to fire, and Eve closed the distance between herself and MacKinnon. Eldred stared into his daughter's face as she shrank there, braving the weapon he held.

for one look about, and the first object on which his gaze focused was the hooker at the dock, gleaming white in the moonlight.

Dimmock had carried the story of what transpired to his master, omitting nothing, and now a portion of Eldred's rage was diverted from Mosseau to MacKinnon. All day, anyhow, he had been uneasy. The shock of last night's recognition had endured without a break.

Jode MacKinnon was buried in the lake; he had no fear that a law would be brought to harry him—no law from books—but he was uneasy before the accusing eye of this other MacKinnon, and David's warning had been ringing in his consciousness during all waking-hours since last night.

A dull ache flooded his breast as he stood there, but after that came strength, the strength of rage that has been held back, and he went along the dock and stepped carefully aboard the *Annabelle*.

The hatch cover was off and he dropped into the hold, stood still to listen and struck a match. The clean brasses of the motor gleamed at him and, again in darkness, he knelt beside it, fumbling beneath the gasoline-tank. A grunt and a sigh; another match, but his fingers were not strong enough. By the smoky flare of the match he found the pliers in a closed box. He groped for the pet-cock with their jaws, and clamped his hand and felt the tool bite into the softer metal. He moved his wrist, and a trickle of running liquid sounded. There was work with a tin bucket. He stumbled in the dark and muttered impatiently. Then a third match and a hasty scramble for the deck.

As Eldred's heavy torso was lifted upward, his watch-chain broke and, on hands and knees on deck, he felt the dangling ends and groped hastily for the charm that was missing. He cursed under his breath as he felt along the planks, then peered into the hold, lighted well enough by then, and stared, but could not see the trinket. He stuffed the broken chain into his vest pocket as he began running stealthily up the dock. Behind him, the spars of the schooner commenced to flush from the light in her hold.

DAVID MACKINNON shouted a protest to a man who ran before him with an ax to cut the lines that held his hooker against the dock, and then he realized that it was useless to keep her there, for in her vitals roared a furnace that no line of buckets could extinguish. She drifted off, flames belching through her one hatch, illuminating the night. With a sharp thud, a leap and a shower of flame, the gasoline-tank exploded and burning fluid clung to spars and rigging and took hold and ate until the *Annabelle* looked like some pageant-ship festooned in fire as she drifted on to her flamboyant death.

The trader stood with drawn face among the other watchers, seeing the fire eat up the thing he loved so well. The mainmast went down with a crash and a shower of sparks; the foremast went next, slowly, as if yielding reluctantly to weakness. The planking melted; the vessel grounded and held motionless, then began to list slowly. Dismantled, black, with great holes eaten in her body, she lay there helpless. But no flame had found hold on the bowsprit. The spar remained intact, and pointed shoreward with that saucy tilt, as though the *Annabelle* had gone to her end unbroken and undismayed.

Norman Eldred appeared from nowhere. His men made way for him. He stopped beside MacKinnon.

"Unfortunate," he said, when he saw that his presence alone would not compel the other's notice. After their gazes met, he added, "For you."

Light-points danced in his eyes—not anger, this time, but hinting at good humor, a feeling of well-being. And as he saw this and caught the ironical ring of triumph in King Norman's voice, thunder grew in MacKinnon's face.

"An ill wind that blew you in here," Eldred said, "although it might have happened anywhere—might have," he repeated, and could not keep the gloat from his tone.

MacKinnon said harshly,

"Until now, Eldred, it's blown *you* no good." He walked away, cramming his hands into his pockets.

A gasoline-boat was standing into the harbor, but David gave it no heed until the *Kittiwake* docked and Gam Gallagher stood beside him.

"That yours?" the Irishman asked.

Their eyes met, and words were not necessary for reply.

"This soon? Ah, boy, it's hell's acre ye picked out to trade in this time!"

MacKinnon nodded.

"And I'd like to get away now. I don't want to go off half cocked, and I'm pretty mad. If I stay here, I'll have to hurt somebody, and maybe I wouldn't do a good-enough job."

They went aboard the *Kittiwake* together and started out of the harbor. Until they made the turn toward Beaver Island, MacKinnon stood on the stern watching the ember that had been his *Annabelle.* Then he muttered,

"If it's so, you're as black a vixen as you seemed to be a white angel."

And about that time a Mackinaw boat, which had been making her slow way up Thunder Bay all the afternoon, came to anchor off Alpena. An old man was sailing her alone. His hair was gray, his scraggly beard gray, his skin gray and drawn and wrinkled. Over his right eye was a ragged scar, suet against gray. The sinews at his wrists stood out sharply, making deep hollows as he stowed his canvas for the night.

He had a crude little shelter rigged between the two stubby spars; an oil-stove was there, some pots and pans, a bunk. He lighted the stove and put water on to boil. Then, standing up outside, he scanned the fishing-boats at anchor between him and the lights of the town. His lips worked continually and his eyes roved without cessation with a queer, bright, vacant light.

Ever since the ice moved in Lake Huron he had been doing that—staring at boats with his vacant eyes. More, he had scanned the settlements of fishermen, and in the towns where only one or two made their livelihood by handling nets, he hunted out their homes and peered and mumbled.

Last year it had been the Canadian side of the lake he sailed; the year before it had been Lake Erie, and always his manner and method were the same. He asked few questions, just mumbled and stared, but he was persistent, and little remained unseen by those odd eyes.

People talked to him rarely, and then, for the most part, he appeared not to hear what was said to him. One question, though, always arrested his attention, for when men asked, "Lookin' for somebody, dad?" or, "Who you expectin', uncle?" his eyes would remain on their faces a lengthy period and his hands would rummage in his beard as though striving to concentrate on a reply; now and then he would mumble as he shuffled away, "Two—two hearts—both mine—one to—and one to keep——"

He was a weird figure as he stood in his boat this May evening, weak of body, burning with some uncanny strength of purpose. Once, however, as his eyes roved among the scattered boats at anchor about him, tears came into them and a sob ran through his thin throat. After that he turned back to his sputtering oil-stove and sat down on the edge of the narrow bed and began preparing a scanty meal, his lips still moving.

His boat swung idly at her anchor. On her bows a name was painted, done in crude characters. The lettering read:

REVENGE
PORT BRUCE, ONT.

SO DAVID MACKINNON came to the Beavers, where his father had met disaster and confronted the same force, bravely, arrogantly, and came off second-best, as other and older and as good men had done.

The story spread out over the lake, into the Straits, over into Green Bay and the Bays de Noc, where David was well known; it went down the east shore, too, and whenever men heard it they shrugged and said it would be well for the lad to let bad enough alone.

That is what the good Irishmen at St. James, where David had gone with Gam Gallagher told him, too; more, they urged that he keep away from Garden Island and Norman Eldred. They urged, because, when they spoke their minds and proffered advice to this son of the man they had known and liked, he did not respond with assent, he did not argue with them, and though he whistled his aimless, gay little tune, there was a look on his face which was nothing if not determination—unless it were obstinacy.

The trader liked Gallagher; it was to his house he went for shelter on the night of the fire. It was Gam alone of those the lad met who forebore any well-intentioned attempt to frighten David away from the islands and Norman Eldred; he kept silent and never brought up the matter until the last night that David was to be in his house.

After a winter of idleness and with his boat gone, it was necessary for David to do some manner of work. As Gam had given his shelter, so he gave him opportunity to be busy, because he had planned extensive fishing and men were scarce. A set of trap-nets off the shore of High Island bothered him particularly, and he talked it over and found that MacKinnon was willing to handle the *Islander*, another of his gasoline-boats, and live on that island with the Indians who were to be his helpers.

"There's a good house to live in there," he said. "I've used it myself other springs. The Indians have their own shack, too, an' ye'll have so much to do that maybe it'll help ye forget yer hot reception to the Beavers."

David laughed shortly.

"I wouldn't like that. I want to remember it."

Gam rubbed his beard thoughtfully.

"It's none of my business boy, but I like ye, as I liked yer father, an' I'm not wantin' to see ye in more trouble." This elicited no response, and after a pause he went on: "I've had a notion ever since yer boat burned that mebbe ye wanted, or mebbe ye thought ye could get back at Eldred." He looked cautiously at his companion. "It's a bad job, lad. To try to do anything would only—" It was his manner to leave sentences unfinished.

"Make matters worse; is that it, Gam?" David stirred and smiled slightly.

"Perhaps," Gam answered.

"Funny how time'll heal up hurts, and how a man can't get away from his job! It don't seem real any more—the things I went through when I wasn't any bigger than your littlest. I was just that—a little kid—when you come over to Fayette to tell us about my father. I cried all night, I remember; thought I'd never have a dry eye again, but that was only the beginnin'. I thought a lot of my sister——"

HIS hands were locked behind his head, and he gazed at the low ceiling as he spoke without a tremor of emotion.

"And then, when we'd scarce got used to havin' her out of the house, my mother began to go, and something told me from the beginnin' that she'd never get up again. She didn't care about it, I guess. Oh, she cared enough for me; but her heart was gone—understand? Nobody can keep on without a heart. Just one thing she seemed to care about in those days—that Eldred didn't take the last of us, which was me. She'd talk about what I was goin' to do when she was gone and planned school and things for me that'd take me off the lakes, and make me promise over and over that I'd never set foot on the Beavers.

"But I couldn't keep off the lakes—might as well have tried to stop eatin' as that. I grew up with the fishermen, but the older I got the more restless I was—because I was tryin' to dodge my real job, I expect. I went with a trader, and we had a little luck and I got hold of a boat of my own. She made money, carryin' shingles and hay and the like, and finally I had the *Annabelle* and thought I was satisfied and settled down.

"I'm no better or worse than the run of men on the lakes. Sort of shiftless, maybe. All I cared about, I thought, was to keep my hooker in as good shape as a good boat deserved. I've done my share of hellin'. I've been broke and drunk for quite a while at a stretch. I've combed the beaches after wrecks and beat the underwriters to it more 'n once. But I guess all the while I've been dodgin' what I had to do, tryin' to keep busy and keep away from it, and that made me sort of shiftless.

"When I pulled out of Green Bay this spring, I meant to go way below, into Erie, anyhow, and maybe Ontario, which I expect was another scheme to make me keep the promise I made to my mother. But it wouldn't work. The lake—see?—tossed me into Eldred's arms, and here I am, with the whole thing—my father and what happened to the rest—as fresh as it was when I was a kid, almost—only, I don't feel like cryin' now."

He was silent a moment.

"Of course you and I and the rest round here are pretty well satisfied my father was killed. Nobody can prove it, though. I—I sort of dared Eldred to try dirty work with me, and the next night he burned me out. Anyhow, it's reasonable to think he did. I don't know for sure yet, but I'm goin' to find out, if that can be done. I think he and the girl planned the whole works; she dragged me ashore with a damned cock-and-bull story, and when I flared up about her father—he was mentioned—she got sore, and about that time the *Annabelle* was on fire.

"That's why I want to hang round. I don't want to try to hit him before I know, but I'll tell you and these islands and anybody else who wants to listen that if I find out for sure that he set my hooker afire, he's goin' to pay with everything he's got. We never can quite prove that other—what he likely did to my father, but if I can prove this, I'll collect enough to square the whole account, as near as a bill like that can be collected!"

It was indicative of the judgment of Gam Gallagher that he made no remonstrance. His only comment was:

"Luck to ye, lad!"

AND so another tale went across the lake—not told with so much interest as the other, not reaching such remote places, but it was a tale which made men who knew Eldred stop and consider, for tongues had it that young Dave MacKinnon, the trader, had not been frightened away by the king of Garden Island—that he had made threats, not as men usually threaten, but only when forced to it by those well-intentioned advisers who would have him make the best of a bad mess.

Among the other places, this story was told on Garden Island itself, in Eldred's own house, by the red-bearded Dimmock. Eldred listened without comment; even his eyes did not change as they rested on Dimmock's face, but once his hand moved on the chair arm jerkily.

Fragments of the tale reached elsewhere—the ears of Eve Eldred, for one; she knew that MacKinnon was fishing on High Island, but when she carried the query to her father, she was met by evidence of displeasure. It was well, he said, that MacKinnon's hooker had burned, because he was a trouble-hunter by nature.

"But Jode—" she began.

"He is not like his father," Eldred interrupted sharply.

A moment of silence.

"I thought, perhaps, he might be, that he might be my—friend."

The man walked away then with a short laugh, and the girl stood watching him go, greatly troubled.

It had been momentary relief to Eve to tell David MacKinnon of her fears and misgivings and unhappiness. Relief had come when she was talking to him and could see response in his face, but thereafter it seemed as though the very crystallizing of thought into expression increased the significance of all those factors which had disturbed her. The thing on which she had touched most lightly in her talk with her father was the outstanding phase of the situation, and this weighed the more heavily thereafter. She inwardly shrank from his touch and was in turmoil when near him. Fear of betraying this revulsion came now to heighten her discomfort, and, with the attitude of the men of the crew, such as it was, she needed his actual protection more than ever.

Whenever mention had been made of MacKinnon, her father acted strangely, and twice after the fire she had seen him aboard the ruin that had once been a graceful hooker, poking among the charred timbers as though in search of something. Quite innocently, she remarked about his missing watch-charm, and he had been impatient at her wonder, saying he had lost it back in the forest.

Mosseau had escaped, vanished, without leaving a trace of which she was aware, but what he had done remained a matter for discussion among the crew. She could tell that from the way they looked at her. She did not know who would be the next to dare.

Then there was MacKinnon. She did not care so much, because the men who had seen him humiliate her did not know that he had made amends for that, but, having made him her confidant, she was in great need of him, and he was gone, his return unlikely, now that his schooner was a charred ruin on the beach. One thing troubled her—that look he had flashed before he swung through the door to run toward the burning *Annabelle*. It was little short of ferocious, and it shocked her as his rebuke in the store had shocked her. But it was unexplained; she was not certain that she had interpreted the expression rightly, and there were so many other memories of him that were pleasant.

She kept to the house largely in the following days, and when she went outdoors it was with care not to be far from her father, at once a cause for depression and her protector. For hours she would scan the lake with a glass, hoping to discover David coming back, that she might again talk to him. And one afternoon that hope took fire as Gam Gallagher's *Islander* banged her way into the harbor and came to anchor in the shallow water by the remains of the *Annabelle*, and MacKinnon and Fred Mink, one of his Indian helpers, protected by hip-boots, dropped into the charred hulk and began the task of salving what remained of value.

Atremble with excitement, Eve stood by a window to see the men toil. Stood there until darkness came—uneasy, undetermined, seeing the motor slung laboriously aboard, watching David and his man work in the cold water. This vigil was interrupted by the coming of her father, who had been back on the island on some errand. Half guiltily the girl turned away from the window when she saw his approach, and soon after he entered she left the room. Returning shortly, she found that he had taken her place and stood, hands clasped behind his back, head hung forward. He did not appear to hear Eve coming, and she stopped in mid-room, attracted by his heavy breathing. When he did turn, it was with a start, as though detected in some guilty act, and he went to his desk, where he sat with his head bowed so his daughter might not see the strange new lights of apprehension that danced with the anger in his eyes.

TWO hours passed. Eve was in the store, with the usual dozen or more men lounging about the stove. The buying for the evening was practically over, and the girl behind the counter piled stocks on a shelf, acutely aware of the eyes which did not leave her for long.

Dimmock and another stood near the door, conversing lowly, when boots came up the steps in hurried measure and stopped on the threshold. The newcomer was David MacKinnon, and he stopped outside, looking in. About him was that which caused men to stop talking, and it was the hush which attracted Eve and made her turn. Her heart leaped, because he was there, within a few feet of her; and then it went on in swift measure because she saw a belligerent tensity which alarmed her.

David's survey of the room was swift and decisive. He advanced toward Dimmock.

"Where's Eldred?" he asked, and Eve started because his manner was clearly a challenge.

Dimmock eyed him suspiciously and replied.

"Ain't he in the house?"

"Went there first."

"If he ain't there, I don't know." And then, "What you after?"

With that question, MacKinnon's face broke into a scornful smile as he looked down at the articles he held in his hands.

"See that, Dimmock?" Eve heard him say, as he held up a blackened bit of twisted metal. She could not see that attached to one end was a pet-cock, turned open and with the marks of pliers' jaws on it. "And that?"—as he flipped the pliers open. He thrust them toward the other so he could see. "Those marks came from these, didn't they? And it was closed when I left. She burned like a torch, Dimmock. You know where *that* came from!" He tossed the watch-charm that Eldred had worn to the counter. His words were meaningless to the girl, and she could not see Dimmock's face as he studied the pet-cock which had drained the *Annabelle's* gasoline-tank, with its telltale evidence of treachery.

"What do I want, Dimmock? I'll tell you what I want. I want to tell the man that you call 'king' here that he's been runnin' on a long line, but that now he's used up the slack. I want to tell him that he's tried the MacKinnons once too often. That other"—voice shaking a trifle—"is too long ago, so long that it's all guesswork. There ain't any guesswork here"—wiping his hands slowly on his hips—"and I'm lookin' for King Norman to knock his damned crown off!"

His voice was steady and clear and loud, rising as he delivered his threat, and Eve felt her heart chilling. Not because of the threat against her father, not because of any outraged sense of loyalty, but because this was the man she had liked—he who, she had hoped, was to be her friend.

She found herself slipping round the end of the counter, walking quickly toward him.

"I thought from the first that this happened," David went on, "and everybody else thought so, but I wouldn't open my head until I was sure. I'm sure enough now, and I've come to say that for the last time Eldred has played his hand too high. I——"

He stopped shortly, because Eve was before him, very white of face.

"Don't say that!" Her voice was pinched, and the words sounded as though very little breath had been behind them. "Go away! You don't know what you're doing!"

She was unconscious, as she spoke, of the men about her, hardly conscious of what she said. She wanted this man to run, to board his boat and seek the safety of distance, wanted to warn him that this was foolhardy, though she did not even know the quarrel. She had wanted him for her friend, but now she knew she could not have him. The next thing was to be a friend to him, to wish him well, to head him away from difficulties into which he was rushing.

But he did not take it so. Some of the rigidity went from his shoulders as he looked down at her, and she heard him laugh.

"So you'd like to have me pull out, eh?" he asked. "The king wants me to go, and the princess, too!" He laughed again and moved forward. Eve felt hot blood beating into her cheeks and her knees trembled. "I'd almost forgotten about you," he went on, "almost forgotten you, you little—*decoy!*"

He fairly spat out that epithet. Eve checked her slow retreat.

MacKinnon laughed once more.

"You were damned anxious to thank me, weren't you? You were right on the job with your song and dance. Or was the whole thing framed with the Frenchman to drag me in?"

"I don't know what you're talking about," she said breathlessly. "You threatened my father and I told you to go. Now, don't you threaten me!"

She drew herself up in an unconvincing show of courage, not designed to impress the trader but for the men.

"I don't recollect makin' any threats to you," he said, "but, now you mention it, maybe there's one or two due you. Bad luck—wasn't it?—when I stopped the frog here in this room. It'd have served you right—if it wasn't a frame-up—to 've had him kiss you. Maybe that'd help even our score—yours and mine."

His advance had brought him close to her, reckless amusement with the anger in his eyes. His hand went to hers, which lay on the counter, and clenched it.

"Let me go!" she cried sharply. "Let me— What are you doing?"

David laughed and imprisoned her other hand when it flashed out to strike his wrist.

"I'm goin' to take back the only thing I ever did for you. The frog isn't here, but I'll finish for him. I'll kiss you, you decoy, and make you like it!"

Eve cried out, and her voice sounded faint even in her own ears—just the one word: "Father!" She saw Dimmock's amazed face behind MacKinnon, saw others, heard them moving, and caught for a scant instant the picture of one fisherman grinning. They were glad to see her in trouble.

MacKinnon's arms were about the girl, and his body was pressing close to hers. She was making half-choking, throaty sounds, and she bent backward, shaking her head, fighting against this humiliation with her weakened body, her faint heart. He was only playing her, then, as an angler plays a well-hooked fish. Then her face was brought close to his, roughly and bruskly; she saw his lips lowering, saw for an instant his eyes so close to hers, and with all the hard luster in them there was something else—some new thing, something which neutralized a part of her fear.

And then his lips were on hers, bruising and burning, and she was fighting to be rid of their touch, even while some bursting emotion which had forever been pent up and held from expression rose to that brutal caress. She felt his breath on her cheek and was conscious of the dependable strength of his arms, of the firmness of his flesh—and of the peculiar pleasure which came even with his roughness. She did not want to escape. She did not want to be free. And so, for a split instant, she relaxed and lay there in his arms, her lips against his.

A cackling laugh, rising from behind, roused the girl and caused her to throw her head desperately aside, tearing her lips from his. She was free, staggering from him, brushing a hand across her mouth as though to wipe off the memory of that enforced kiss, flaming with humiliation while MacKinnon stood laughing in easy triumph.

The silence which had shut down upon the room after that scant fraction of time was as complete as it was unprefaced. MacKinnon followed some intuitive impulse and looked toward the doorway.

NORMAN ELDRED was standing there. He had seen and stopped, balanced on the balls of his feet, watching MacKinnon, watching Eve now, who was backed a half-dozen paces from the man who had accomplished that which he had once prevented another from doing.

Time seemed to slow for that instant; it was only the space of a breath, but for Eve Eldred it was a season, an era, an unendurable period. She saw her father's rage, saw the tensity sweep over those others as it had come upon her, because she knew what happened to men on Garden Island when Norman Eldred's temper was roused.

And then it came—a squaring of his feet for a firmer stance, the whipping of a hand toward his hip beneath the jacket he wore, and it came back in the space of an eyewink, dragging in its clasp the dull blue of an automatic pistol.

Dimmock turned and vaulted the counter; behind the stove men scurried for safety, for they were in line with the trader, who stood crouching for his spring.

But he did not leap because, as the hand with the pistol whipped upward to fire, there came another movement and Eve closed the distance between herself and MacKinnon. She was beside him, before him, back against his body, clutching for his wrists and crying:

"Father! Father!"

The gun-hand had come to its shooting-position. Eldred was swaying forward as though he would speed the bullet with the bitterness in his own heart, but the trigger-finger did not move. That cry, twice repeated, was filled with pleading, with terror, and for an instant Eldred stared into his daughter's face as she shrank there, braving the weapon he held.

Then came a twitching of the arm. It lowered slowly, hesitated, began to rise. It went up, and his teeth flashed in the depths of his beard as at a twinge of pain, or as though it required great physical effort to move that arm. And then his hand sank to his side, all but dropped to his side; the fingers opened and the pistol thumped to the floor. He put out the other hand quickly to the door-casing, while the one which had dropped the weapon groped to his side and clenched there, as if some burning pain gnawed at the flesh.

That roused the girl, who through the tense interval had made no move. She took the few steps quickly and stopped very close to her father.

"Father—I will go to the house."

Then she moved again toward the door, but a twitching of the hand that had been at his side checked her, and she stood watching him while he seemed to struggle for strength to speak. His eyes focused on her face after an effort, and with a shove of the hand against the casing, he brought himself erect. His voice came dully.

"House? Whose house?"

"Why—" She did not go on, for he was smiling—a sickly, terrible smile.

"Not my house," he said. "You have made your choice. Not to my house. To his house who will have you—who can take you——"

By the stove, some one stirred and muttered, and Eve turned her head quickly. She looked at that group of faces, saw them staring at her father, saw the man who had grinned turn a brutal gaze on her face. Still looking over her shoulder at them as one who was all but compelled to remain in danger by the fascination of that danger, she went through the doorway.

And then, in the silence, MacKinnon laughed again, and with a hand in his pocket went close to Eldred, who stood with his head drooping.

"I was lookin' for you, King Norman, to knock your damned crown off," he said, "but this—it's enough for a beginnin'!"

He lifted his free hand then, and snapped the thumb close against Eldred's face and, chuckling to himself, walked out.

EVE halted half-way between store and house and watched David MacKinnon go down the beach.

For a certainty she was without protection now. There went the only man but one who had ever defended her, and that other had just refused even the shelter of his house.

She could hear the men stirring in the store, hear their voices rising in the first murmurs of embarrassed talk, and those sounds struck her with cold fear. No longer was the presence of her father a restraint upon them; no longer was there anything between their impulses and her safety.

Go back to her father and argue? It gave her a creepy sensation, for she had seen him enraged before, but never had she seen such evil in his face as had been there a moment ago.

If she could get away from this island,

she might be safe, but what good would an attempt do when stronger arms than hers could propel boats in chase? If a friendly tug should happen in, if that woman from the light should come, if David MacKinnon— She caught her breath. She heard a man on the store steps speak. She was flying through the shadows.

It was only a short distance to the beach, but by the time Eve had emerged from the shadow of the net-house, her breathing was desperately fast.

"Come back!" she called chokingly.

David, splashing through the water and already half-way to his anchored boat, stopped and looked about. She stood at the water's edge, watching him.

"Now what do you want?" he asked sharply.

"Come back!" she repeated, and added a faint "Please!"

For a moment the man remained irresolute, and then turned slowly toward shore, curiosity stirred by this summons.

"Well, I'm back," he said, stopping close to her.

The girl studied his shadowed face.

"You didn't hear what my father said?"

"Yes."

Eve looked back at the store again and tugged at one hand with the other.

"He said—that his house wasn't mine any more. He told me——"

"I was there, and I've got ears. Did you think——"

"That is why I followed you, to have a place—to go."

The man lifted a hand and rubbed his chin with the backs of his fingers.

"So *that's* it!" She nodded. "You're comin' to *me* for help?"

"You are my only chance."

"What makes you think I'll help you?"

She waited a bit before saying in a whisper,

"Because you—you're different."

He laughed rather scoffingly.

"What if I say that I won't help you?"

"You're not going to say that! You know what it means to leave me here." He laughed once more, but she went on, reaching out to grasp his sleeve and shake the arm intently: "I told you the other night that it's been my father who's stood between me and those men. I told you how they—how they looked at me, how they waited and watched, and how I'd been safe because they were afraid of him—my father. To-night they heard him send me away—and he said that I belonged to—whoever could take me. That's what he said, and they heard him." She halted, for her excited breathing broke up the sentences. "You're my only chance at safety—that's why I ran after you. Just to-night—just to help me away."

Her voice caught on the last, and the hand that had touched his sleeve let go its hold.

MacKinnon stirred and looked from her frost-white face to the shadows of men approaching the shacks. Some had stopped and were watching him, he knew. The girl had not overstated her situation.

"You're not safe here," he said. "That's sure. Do you think you'd be safe with me?"

She looked up, and her expression changed from desperation to a certain calculation, a certain hardness.

"I'm not asking you for—for safety," she said. "I'm just asking you to take me away—that's all——"

Her expression puzzled him; he did not know whether it was fear or guile, but while he watched her and absorbed the shock of her reply this fact struck him: that the girl was in his hands. To-night he had shattered King Norman's dream of keeping his daughter ever loyal to him, and it was not unlikely that Eldred's regret for what he had done would be as sudden and as profound as the rage which had put her away. Here, then, was a chance to remove her presence, and should the king want her back, that revenge would be picturesque indeed!

"Fair enough!" he said and laughed. He stooped and lifted her and sloshed out through the water and set her lightly down on the rail and scrambled aboard himself.

IT IS an hour's run from Garden to High Island for a craft like the *Islander* with its heavy-duty motor, and in that time at least two people aboard did a deal of thinking. Fred Mink, the Indian, sat at the wheel and steered, and if he thought much, he gave little evidence of it.

After the motor was turning regularly and he had looked at the oil-supply, David drew off his oilskins and stood abaft the engine, looking at the girl, who sat crouched on a locker behind the Indian, dimly revealed by the reflected glow of the binnacle-light. She had not spoken since she came aboard; she had dropped on that locker as though the last strength had gone. Her face was in shadow.

THE man went out on the stern, where he stood looking along their wake to the few lights that showed on Garden Island. That particular smile with which he had listened to the warnings of men who feared that he would come to grief with Eldred was on his face now, accentuated and augmented by a dancing light of boyish triumph. He ran a hand through his hair as he remembered Eldred's collapse when Eve sprang to protect him, and he chuckled when he thought how the story would go over the lakes—that Jode MacKinnon's boy had run away from Garden Island, with Eve Eldred for his prisoner.

That is what she was—his prisoner. He considered her so. For a flash, back there on the beach, he had been conscious of pity, because it was not pleasant to think of any girl with eyes and lips and a body like Eve's left to the mercy of men like her father. But that was gone now, and what he saw in the situation was a second blow at her father; more than a blow—stock with which to make the man ridiculous!

And he owed the girl a score, too. He was now helping her out of one hideous situation, but she would be far from comfortable in that escape, he told himself. No, indeed! She would pay for this rescue, and fully! She would pay, too, for the part she had played in the destruction of the *Annabelle*. She would pay with suspense and uncertainty and fear, for he would keep this girl guessing.

And while he stood outside, Eve sat slumped forward. As the boat gathered way her spinning mind had steadied a bit, and by the time David had gone on deck, she was thinking fast.

She was free from the menace of her father's men, and she had traded on the beach with MacKinnon very eagerly; but now, with the one danger obviated, the other loomed before her as a thing as monstrous as the first.

She heard again his challenge: "Do you think you'd be safe with me?" and in memory his tone became more insinuating, more forbidding. She had come with him; she had even said that she was not asking for safety. She had lied then in her bargaining, for she thought it would be a bribe which she could retrieve later. There had been no time for regard of truth and honor there on the beach.

At least she had achieved something. The menace was concentrated in one man. She knew that, except for the Indians, he lived alone on High Island; she did not fear Fred Mink and the other. To protect herself from MacKinnon, then, became her sole objective.

And, as she planned, she became desperate; but she was alert, frightfully calm, driven to clear thought by the situation. There would be no escaping him; that much was certain. She could not argue with him because his front to-night had been one of scornful enmity.

She tapped a foot swiftly and hugged her body. To protect herself from him—to keep him away until morning—for a day—a week. He was hard—as hard as rock, as hard as steel. As hard as the steel of those knives used in dressing fish which were racked against the wall—as hard as those knives— She started. There were three, blades narrow and thin from long use. They were sharp knives—very sharp, she knew. A bargain meant nothing; she was concerned with one thing—her safety. MacKinnon had taunted her with his own menace. And her strength was no strength for his.

She sat further forward. David could not see her. Mink lounged on the wheel, watching the water ahead. She drew a foot across the boards, but he did not look back. She stirred, but still the Indian showed no interest. She stood up, and he did not move. And then, like a stalking cat, she crossed the housing, waited, looked swiftly about. She sat down again and tapped her foot and hugged her body, but not so tightly as before, for in her blouse was a knife, one hand gripping its handle.

She was aware of the mechanics of bringing the boat to dock, heard the lines go out and made fast. She was alone, with both men outside. She heard words, muffled, and then Mink said:

"All righ'. See you in the mornin', Dave." And his footsteps went up the resounding dock.

Eve was more alone than she had ever been in her life. A show of strength, her father had preached, was the assurance of safety; she had summoned that front almost daily for years, but it had never been convincing perhaps to any man, and she even had confessed her weakness and fear to MacKinnon.

But now it was not so. What protection she might have would come from her own wits and strength of heart, and as she stood there in the darkness of the boat listening for David's next movement or word, that front which she had only assumed became real. It was one of those moments of peril when slack and flabby courage becomes taut and strong, and as she felt the boat list slightly when MacKinnon's weight came on it, she gathered herself for a spring, and her heart was as determined, as unfaltering as the grip of the hand on that knife-handle. He was saying,

"Come along now; we'll go to the house."

One impulse in the girl was to rebel, to force the issue then and there; but another—some sudden weakness, some part of her which still shrank from the crisis, which, perhaps, was hope for an easier way—urged her on, and she went.

His one foot was on the rail and the other on the dock. She hesitated, and, as though from a considerable distance, she heard him say, "Here; I'll help you across." And his hand was on her arm, helping her step to the dock, steadying her; and the hand held there while they walked forward, tightening like a locked band of steel.

"Cold?" he asked, and she shook her head, at which he laughed. "Not afraid, are you?"—mockingly. "You tremble so."

Resentment came with that, and she tried to pull away, but he hung on and, an instant later, steadied her as she walked a stringer of the half-ruined wharf. She did not know whether his hand was aid or trap. She was aware that he was searching her face, and she flashed a look at him, at which he laughed. Rage came, paralleling fresh fear; he seemed to be so sure of her, so sure of himself, as though he followed some well-formed and familiar plan.

They went slowly up the beach, Eve's pulses hammering at her ears, fully alive to but one thing: the knife which she clutched—her last hope, her only chance, she felt.

They stopped in the shadow of a log house and MacKinnon fumbled at the latch and looked at her with that deviling laughter still in his eyes.

And then she was inside, alone with him in a dark room, and his hand was gone from her arm. She went forward swiftly, turning in the darkness with the knife drawn, for she expected pursuit. She heard him moving. He was not following, and under cover of the sound she kept on until she touched a wall. It was rough and hung with clothing. She went along it slowly, breath quick, until she came to a door—a door!

She reached for the knob, all but sobbing aloud in suspense. She could not face him there in a room within four walls—strong walls. Her courage was failing; she could not fight with the spirit that her father had encouraged. She must flee, must be away, outside—and here was a door!

Her hand found the knob, and in a flutter of excitement and relief she turned it, but before the latch moved, a match scratched and flared. Eve found herself backed tightly against the door, facing him, waiting. But David was turned the other way as he fussed with the bracket-lamp on the wall, burning match in one hand, chimney in the other. The wick flared; the chimney went on. Carefully he waved out the match, tossed it toward the cook-stove which stood in one corner and turned.

The girl shrank farther back against the panels of the door. Her face was half averted as though from an expected blow.

He stepped forward, and a last flare of desperate courage swept through the girl, but he stopped by a chair in mid-floor and drew it back against the wall. Then he looked closely at her.

"Rough—but good enough," he said. "Your room"—with an exaggerated wave of a hand toward the door against which she cringed and a derisive bow—"and the door locks from the inside. I sleep on the boat. Sweet dreams!"

Eve found herself standing alone, staring at the knife she held as though it fascinated her. Then, with a gesture that was almost fright, she sent it spinning across the floor.

HOW long a time passed before Norman Eldred moved from the doorway in which Eve had left him he did not know.

It was a seemingly endless interval of suffering, of dumb pain, of confusion and heart-break. He stood there as a man whose whole world has collapsed and who has no further need for the ability to move or think or speak. In an instant his kingdom had become chaos. Not because he had lost command of his crew, not because his property or profits or ascendency was threatened, but because the object for which he had worked and dominated was wiped out.

Strong as he was, Eldred had had moments when rage could not drive fear completely from his heart. One of them came when he looked into the face of Jode MacKinnon's son and saw that the boy was undismayed at the prospect of a clash with him. That was something new—encountering a man who dared challenge him, who, instead of showing humility, showed insolence.

For the hour he had been able to put this by, promising himself that the trader would pay as others had paid, and then he had stood in the shadows and seen David MacKinnon listening to what Eve so earnestly told him—listening and watching her with something more than curiosity.

With that came panic. Eldred fired the *Annabelle*, and felt sure that the way of strength had triumphed again and that he was rid of the trader. But MacKinnon would not learn his lesson. He remained near and made threats; he was audacious; he knew no caution, and all these factors combined to put Eldred in a ferment of rage.

He planned many manners of revenge, but in each instance he came against this hard fact: David MacKinnon did not fear him, and it was fear in the hearts of other men on which Eldred had built his position. And then, this night, he had come upon the trader in the store, with Eve in his arms, fighting and calling for help—the fairest avenue to revenge that even a fair-minded man could ask!

A GREAT joy had come into his heart as he reached for the pistol, and a great sickness as Eve, in that stressed second, made her choice. She would defend against her father the man who had humiliated her! Beyond that, there could be no more complete renunciation of the thing for which Norman Eldred had hoped. And so, as a man who had dedicated every hour and every energy toward one objective, only to see it go beyond his touch, he was rocked to the foundations of his consciousness.

The chagrin, the disappointment, the heart-wrench which Eve's action caused him turned the passion that had held her close to his heart to an equally virulent passion that would put her away. She was gone in that one moment, dismissed from his life, he thought. He was once more at the beginnings, with nothing at hand but his tortured heart, his body, his senses. He was aware that the men went out, leaving him alone; he moved to a packing-box and sat down like one who is mortally wounded. His hands hung between his knees; his head drooped forward. After a long time he lifted his face and stared about dully, as though expecting to find others viewing his misery.

But he was alone, except for Friend, just coming to a stop in the doorway, peering at him inquiringly with his amber eyes. The dog was dripping water, for he had swum until tired in the wake of the boat that carried Eve away and had come back.

Eldred rose. Friend advanced, sniffing, and watched as the man stooped to recover his pistol; then he smelled the weapon, and after the tongue of fire had leaped out to sear his troubled nose, he ran in a brief half-circle with his head held close to one shoulder. Then he lay down and turned on his side, and when Eldred walked out, his lifeless tail was thumping the floor in a reflex of his gone happiness. For long Eldred had hated the dog because he had a place in Eve's affections. That cruel and childish revenge seemed to steady his weakened legs and he walked with a degree of assurance as he passed out of the store, unmindful of the lights which still burned, not even taking the precaution to close the door behind him.

He went up the path to his house. Opening the door, he stood and peered into the big room. No lamp was there, but a half-burned log smoldered, throwing the room into eery lights and shadows. He went within, closing the door softly, and looked about. For many minutes he stared into the shadows, and then began to walk among them slowly, groping with his feet, half leaning on chairs as he passed, as though feeling out the obscured places.

He came to a halt by the stairway door and stood looking at the black knob. He was listening, and after he drew the door wide he listened again.

"Eve?" he called finally. "Eve?"—waiting. "Eve?"—the last in a husky tone.

No response, and he made as if to call again, but did not and went up the stairs, clinging to the rail. He paused before her door and listened again and tapped timidly, as though fearful of touching the pine panel. The force of his knuckles was enough to start the unlatched door swinging wide open.

It was as though an invisible hand had drawn it back to show him the white interior bathed in moonlight—and empty.

Eldred spoke the girl's name in a whisper again, and then turned and went downstairs. A thin blue flame burned in the maw of the fireplace, and as he stood at the foot of the stairs, a reflected light-point caught his eye—in the glass of that one picture which hung against the wall. He began to move across the darkened room, eyes on that mirrored light as though it fascinated him. He did not stop until he stood directly before the photograph.

"So!" he cried, and the sound was soft, and long-drawn, like the sighing of wind. "So-o-o! So!"

Then, with a mighty sweep of an arm he snatched the picture from the wall, brandished it about his head and dashed it violently to the floor. He stood staring down at it a long moment as though trying to realize what he had done; then he lifted his feet and stamped the glass and frame and picture to slivers and splinters and rags. It was a dance, a wild, weird dance of hate—and when it was ended the man went across the room with an exaggerated swagger, climbed the stairs and threw himself, still clothed, upon his bed.

The Mackinaw boat, *Revenge*, was standing up Lake Huron in a light night breeze. The soiled and aged man was at the tiller, scanning the lake with those vacant eyes. He was holding almost due north, which course would put him into Detour Passage and Lake Superior. For long he had been muttering incoherently to himself, but of a sudden he stopped. He laughed, too, a strained, husky sound, there alone on the lake, and put his tiller down. The *Revenge* swung up. He flattened his canvas as she took the tack into the west, toward the Straits of Mackinac, which gave him egress to Lake Michigan.

For an hour or more Eve Eldred lay face down on the bed, hands gripping the blankets lightly, breath at first swift and irregular as it bordered on sobs, later easing to a degree of calmness. Finally she sat up. The lamp still burned in the other room, and its glow fell on her through the open door. She rose and went to that door, examining it. A bolt was there, attached to the inside.

"Yes—he was right," she said.

Then she went in, extinguished the lamp and gazed through the window. The boat lay against the dock, and no movement disturbed the still night. She turned and went back to the bedroom, closing the door behind her. For a moment she fingered the bolt, sliding it into its socket; then pushed it back, leaving the door secured only by its latch. She unlaced her boots and without further preparation covered herself with the blankets.

"I was wrong," she said soberly. "And he—didn't mean it."

For the first time her breath caught in an actual sob, but tears did not come, and presently she slept.

SHE watched him come up from the boat in sharp outline against the hard silver of the young day. She stood motionless in the middle of the room as he approached, and could see through the cracks in the door that he paused outside as if listening. She saw, too, his one hand draw back as though he would rap to announce his coming, and heard him grunt to himself as instead of sending his knuckles against the wood he opened the door with a shove of his palm.

"Good-morning," he said and bowed, as he had bowed last night, ironically, with that half-sneering smile on his face.

Eve's lips moved to acknowledge that greeting, but her voice was only a murmur.

MacKinnon advanced to the stove and dropped to his knees, thrusting driftwood into the box and striking a match.

"Pleasant dreams?"—as he carefully applied the flame to the tinder.

"One—I think," she said, and he looked over his shoulder sharply. When he saw the serenity of her eyes, a flicker of astonishment crossed his face and he turned back to the fire.

He rose and began taking cooking-utensils and food from the shelves behind the stove, whistling lightly to himself, not looking at the girl, who stood watching him. Then he took the water-pail from its box and started for the door, still whistling and ignoring her.

"While you get water," she said, "I'll start getting things ready."

She said this eagerly, and the tone might have arrested David under other circumstances, but his reply, as he passed out was:

"You can't do anything here any more than you could if you were in jail."

Eve folded her hands rather meekly before her.

"My, but you put yourself to a lot of trouble!" she said.

He did not reply to this and, as he was then through the doorway, she could not see that his color deepened. She watched him as he tied a line to the pail and dropped it into the lake. Then, before he drew it up, she saw him rub his chin with the backs of his fingers.

For a time thereafter, Dave was occupied with the preparation of breakfast. He made a great clatter with his pans and spoons; he set the table carelessly, dropping plates and cutlery with much noise, and not once did he look at the girl.

He finished stirring his cake-batter. He was adept, demonstrating those fine points of cookery which men who have lived much alone develop, but with the griddle smoking and the fat ready to be smeared on its surface, just, in fact, as he dipped the spoon into the golden batter, the girl asked,

"Don't you ever put salt in your cakes?"

He did not know whether the clearing of her throat before she spoke was an indication of apology or to check laughter; it sounded suspiciously like the latter, and he mumbled something and began to whistle quite loudly, but by the time the salt was stirred in and the first cake was baking, his whistle had died. The coffee boiled over with gusto, and when David thumped down his bowl of batter and pulled the pot to one side, Eve spoke again.

"There! Now, if I'd been helping——"

At once he resumed whistling, without deigning reply.

THE breakfast ready, MacKinnon dragged a chair to the table and looked at Eve.

"Bring up a chair," he said.

They ate in silence, David with a show of appetite, Eve slowly, as though the food did not interest her. The man did not look up from his plate except once, and then to ask Eve if she would have more coffee.

The meal was over, and the sun, which had climbed above the forest-crowned sand bluffs of Beaver Island, was flinging its first level rays through the windows of the cabin. MacKinnon shoved his chair back to rise when Eve spoke abruptly:

"When I tried to thank you that other time, you wouldn't let me. You'll have to now."

The half-concealed smile which had been in her eyes until then was gone, and she was very serious.

"Thank me for what?"

"For last night."

He shrugged then and rose and laughed.

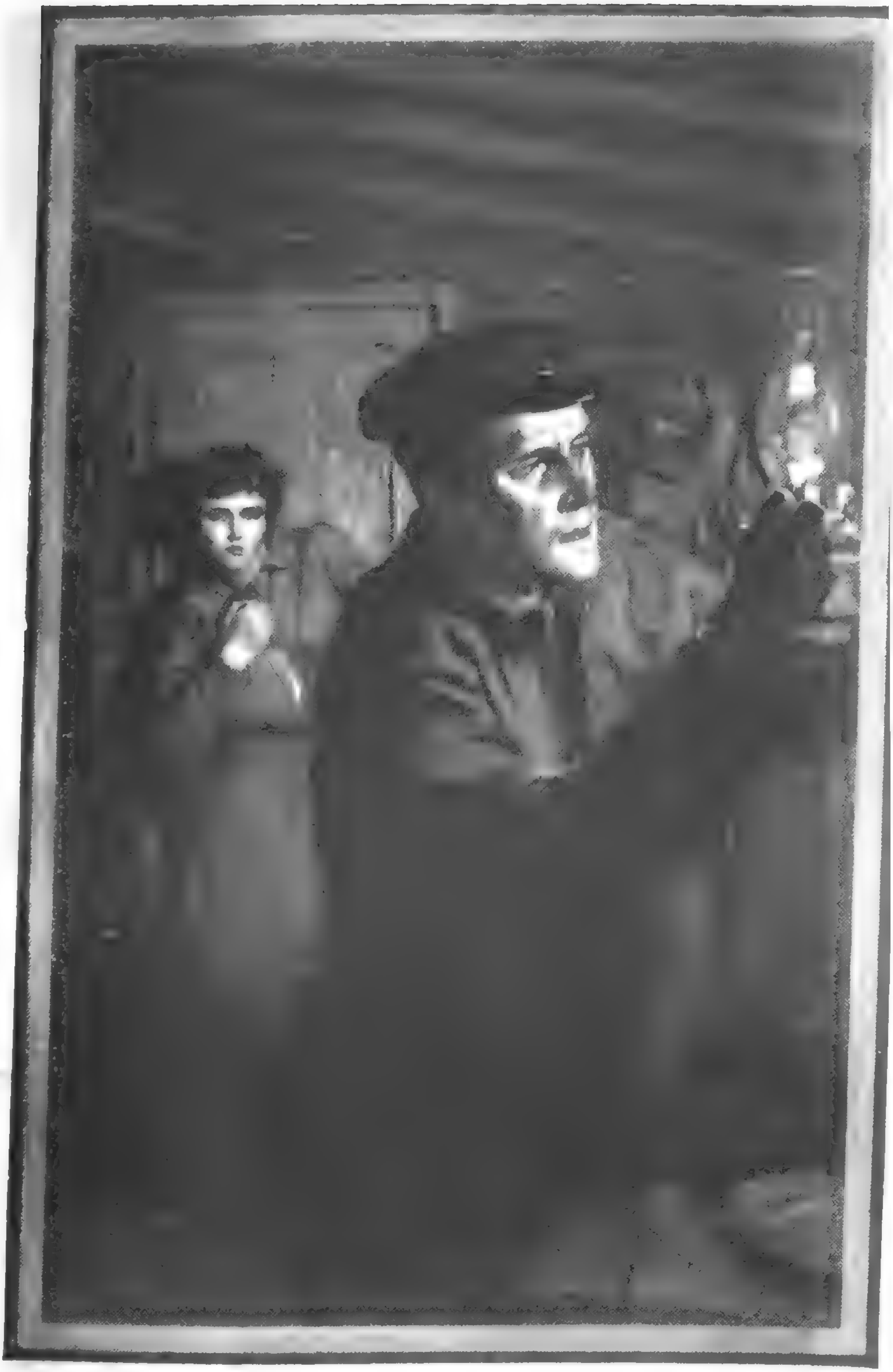
"You better hang on to your thanks until you see what'll happen to you. Remember, you've only landed here; there's lots of time for things to happen that you won't thank me for."

The steadiness of her eyes was most discomfiting, less so, though, than her words, for she went on:

"That's what you said last night, or you meant about that. You're a lot like my dog, Friend. He growls pretty bad, but that's as far as it goes. He'll be friends with anybody. I told you once that a girl doesn't have to know much about men; she can *feel* what men are like, and you're not like any man I ever knew. You scared me, like Friend scares folks, but you're—you're just decent."

In the silence that followed, she looked up at him, and there was that frankness in her eyes which checked what he had intended to say.

"Last night, when I asked you to bring me away with you, I thought—I thought you meant what you said, maybe, that I wouldn't be safe with you. But I'd rather be in danger from one man than from a lot—and—besides, you were different. I meant it when I said that all I cared about was getting away; I meant that until we got out of my father's harbor. For a long time I've tried to make men think I was a fighter when I knew I wasn't, but last night, when I was alone with you, I thought I sure was going to *have* to fight. So I got hold of that." She pointed beneath the stove, and



David was turned the other way as he fussed with the bracket-lamp, burning match in one hand, chimney in the other. The wick flared; the chimney went on.

MacKinnon saw the dressing-knife on the floor, where she had flung it.

"Ready to knife me, eh? I'd expected as much, even after you made your bargain. I didn't promise anything but to take you away."

She nodded assent.

"I wasn't thinking about that. I knew that if you *were* mean I'd have to fight, and that I wasn't strong enough to drive you off. That knife was the best help I could find, and I brought it along."

He said something that indicated contempt, but she did not notice.

"And then you gave up your bed to me and told me I could lock the door. That's what I wanted to thank you for."

"I told you once to be careful of your thanks. That ought to be enough."

She looked soberly at him a moment.

"You're trying to scare me. You had trouble with my father, and you're trying to take it out on me. I don't know what that was about. All I know is that you've treated me as no other man I've ever known would treat me. You were good to me last night; you almost knocked on the door before you came in this morning. You were—were almost kind to me at breakfast. You would 've been, too, if you hadn't kept your mind on trying to act as if you weren't decent. You can't scare me—not any more."

"All right," he said, as he picked up his cap. "If that's the way you look at it, fair enough!" He started out and paused, half turning in the doorway. "I'm goin' to be working on the traps yonder"—with a gesture—"and I'll be in sight of the harbor all day. The only boats on the island are here, and if you try to make a getaway, I'll see you. You won't have a chance!"

He went away toward the dock, but the girl followed as far as the threshold.

"David," she called, "don't worry about my running-away! I'm going to stay here—with you—as long as you'll let me!"

He did not even look back, but as he reached for the bow line of the *Islander*, the backs of the fingers of the other hand rubbed his chin in that gesture of perplexity.

An hour later Eve stood on the extreme point of the sand spit which strikes out eastward to form the High Island harbor. The stiff south wind whipped the skirt about her slim legs and riffled tendrils of dark hair about her erect little head. In her nostrils was that fine, clean smell of wind over great bodies of fresh water, damp, and soft with spring. Her blue eyes were very bright, her lips parted, and cheeks stained with color as she watched. One after another, tugs had appeared from Norman Eldred's harbor and had gone their way to the business of fishing. Now the last had cleared the buoys and was swinging to the northward with a stake-driver in tow. The girl drew one hand through the other and swallowed slowly, and her lips moved.

"Mother," she said huskily, "is it wrong? Is it wrong to feel this way? So—relieved?"

IN THE early afternoon, Gam Gallagher, standing home from the northward, headed in toward the *Islander*, which swung at anchor. He put out in a poundboat to watch David and his Indians setting the trap-nets, and though the talk was of the fishing, the older man's curiosity was caught by that half-laughing, half-perplexed look in the eyes of his helper.

The work over, David and Gallagher sat on the stern of the *Kittiwake* while the Indians cleared up odds and ends preparatory to going ashore, and it was there that Gam's curiosity was satisfied.

His eyes did not leave the younger man's face for an instant until MacKinnon looked up and laughed, like a delighted boy.

"And here I am, holdin' the apple of his eye in the palm of my hand!"

Then Gam shook his head slowly and chuckled.

"It's a good un on him, lad! It's the best ever." Then he became grave. "Ye couldn't 've struck so hard a blow by cuttin' the heart out of his body! Ye're not expectin' him to let her go without tryin' to get her back, are ye?"

"It's likely he'll try."

"An' if he does?"

"That'll be another thing. I'm not makin' any more cracks, but he don't thrill me a dime's worth. In a fight, Gam, it's the first punch that counts the most. I wasn't scared of him at first, and there's sure no need to get lily-hearted now."

The other shook his head skeptically.

"Mebbe not, Dave; mebbe not." And then, after a moment, "An' now, if it's any of my business, what's yer plan for her?"

The lad stirred restlessly, and the other looked closer, for a change came over the face he watched—a shadow of doubt.

"It's killin' two birds with one rock, Gam. It don't square any account, not by a damn sight, but it's a fair beginnin' because it's such sweet punishment for him to lose her; and it'll serve her right to be kept guessin' a while—a few days."

"Ye'll turn her back, then?"

David shrugged.

"I only want to worry her a lot, and after that I don't care."

But he did not look at Gallagher when he said this, and the man's eyes were very keen as they searched his face. After a moment, he laid a big hand on Dave's knee.

"Go easy, boy; ye're young, an' it's springtime, an' whatever else ye'll say of her, she's as fair as a May mornin'!"

David laughed rather hollowly, but Gam did not notice that. He stood up.

"Come inside, lad. I guess Eldred's put no fear into ye, an' mebbe ye can go it alone, but I know him an' his ways, an' I don't want to see ye caught with nothin' but yer hands an' wits when mebbe ye'll need somethin' else."

He opened a locker and drew out a rifle, wrapped in greasy cloths.

"I've carried it," he said, holding it out, "because Eldred fishes these same waters; but I guess he'll bother none of the rest of us for a while now. Take it an' keep her handy."

Dave stepped into his boat and pushed off. Gam stood watching him.

"That's for Eldred," he said, as Dave put down the rifle; "but for the other—there's nothin' I can give ye for her, not even advice."

EVE watched the work that David did that afternoon, and when she saw that the task was almost over, she began preparing the evening meal. She was frying potatoes when he entered and did not look up, though the corners of her mouth twitched as if begging to be allowed to smile. She said,

"It'll be ready in a minute."

He stood over the stove, and finally she lifted her face to see his, cold and clouded.

"Hereafter you'll do no cookin'," he said.

"But I like to! And there's nothing for me to do——"

"That don't matter to me," he snapped. "I don't trust you—in anything. A man wants to know what he eats. There's nothing here but toadstools and broken glass, but——"

She put down the fork and again her mouth twitched, but not from laughter this time.

"David, if I'd wanted to hurt you, it would have been easy last night," she said flatly.

He only said,

"You can't get up any argument here; what I say happens to go!"

If developments depended on his saying anything, little would have been accomplished thereafter that night, for they ate without the exchange of a word and the man went out immediately, without so much as a glance at the girl. Eve listened to his departure and drew a chair close to the stove and put her feet on the hearth and clasped her arms about her knees. Her brows were in a frown and on her face now was real melancholy.

She did not know that aboard the *Islander*, an oil-lamp swinging in gimbals, blankets of his bunk folded to make a comfortable couch, David MacKinnon stared for a half-hour at a single paragraph on the page of a battered magazine. At the end of that time he threw the book away irritably and sat up, putting his head in his hands, and remained so for another lengthy interval. Then he rose and went outside and stood on the dock, gazing out into the lake. There was about his posture something counterfeit, as though his chief interest did not lie yonder across the water, and when the moon, which had been shining through a rift, was again obscured, he turned and went up the beach. But when he approached the cabin where Eve sat before the stove, he went slowly and with great caution, and when he drew near the window through which he could see her, he halted.

For an interval he stood there, a score of feet from her. She moved but little and then only her head, for she still hugged her knees. Once more he became acutely conscious of the luster of her hair, the fineness of feature, soft texture of her skin. And she seemed small—small and alone and defenseless, as she had last night when he held her prisoner and strained her against his body to force her lips to his.

It was of that moment Eve was thinking while he watched. Twenty-four hours ago—and yet it seemed so long since he made that threat before her father's men, and she swallowed dryly as some of the fright returned to her and her lips trembled at memory of that humiliation.

At this point, a strange thing occurred. She could feel his arms roughly about her, again sensed the panic of helplessness as she tried to break free, could feel, in memory, his hot breath on her throat, on her cheek and his lips on hers, and, with this last, that odd something which had been brought to life by the hard caress last night and which had been driven back into her subconsciousness by the events which immediately followed burst into new life. It sent her heart thumping, shot a strange warmth through her body, and she felt herself trembling, not with fright or shame but with some other thing, something new, something delightful!

She lifted her face as though she had been alarmed by a sound, and the man outside was startled at sight of the dynamic beauty which came over her and started back, fearing that in that moment of excitement he had spoken or betrayed himself in some other way.

He circled away from the house and made toward the boat. Eve rose shortly and put out the light. She was turning toward the bedroom door when a low hail from outside attracted her. She paused and listened and heard the voice again; she moved to the window and stared out.

A man was standing there, half-way between the house and the water, and another was coming rapidly toward him through the sand. The first was Mink; the other was MacKinnon. She heard David ask:

"What you doin', Fred?"

"After wood."

"You don't come this way after wood. Get it off the spit."

The Indian said something Eve could not hear.

"Never mind that! You get your wood in daylight from now on, and don't prowl round this house any time so long as she's here."

Without reply, Mink turned and went back to his shack and slammed the door behind him.

Eve saw MacKinnon return to his boat, and watched until the light was extinguished. Then she turned to her bed and nestled in the blankets, curled closely, at once perplexed and at peace. She was puzzled, but felt safe—very safe—on this island with him.

THAT night, Ned Borden and his wife, Jen, were waiting the return from St. James of Pete Larsen, the first assistant keeper, who had gone over at dawn in the supply-boat.

The light glowed in its tower; the fire roared in the stove below, and Aunt Jen, who had been busy for a week in her hours off watch arranging and readjusting the furniture in the dwelling, rocked and darned beside the stove while her husband read from a published volume of sermons by the Rev. T. DeWitt Talmage. Her eyes were far away when her work dropped into her lap. She sighed and breathed an "Oh dear!" Ned looked up.

"What is it, Jenny?"

The woman stopped her rocking.

"I'm just wondering if Pete'll bring back my *Up-to-Date*. I'm all settled now and 've got the goods; time I was working on clothes if I ain't going to look like a grand old relic whenever I go offen this light."

Borden's face broke into a grave smile.

"Bless you, Jenny! You're the best dressed woman on the lakes. Seems to me we didn't bring much but your clothes when we moved over."

Jen sniffed.

"Clothes! I ain't got a thing but that mohair and my old tan tailored to wear ashore. I got that piece of taffeta and the lawn for a dress. If *Up-to-Date* ever gets here, I'll know what they're going to wear this summer, and then I can get busy. This setting and setting when I'm off watch ain't very satisfying."

"What boils were to Job, idleness is to you, my dear. Didn't I hear the machine going late last night?"

"Just some underthings—didn't need 'em, and nobody who counts ever 'll see 'em unless I get in a wreck, but a body has to be doing."

Ned went back to his book of sermons; then after a moment looked up at his wife and cleared his throat.

"My dear, you aren't going to be unhappy here?"

Jen looked at him, startled.

"Unhappy? Why in tarnation do you ask a question like that, Ned Borden? Ain't I got you, you blessed old hay-bag?"

There was, with her bluster, something like fright.

"Why, it's seemed to me that ever since we came here you've been uneasy. It's Eldred's being near here hasn't gotten on your nerves, has it?"

"Humph. *Him?*"

"I know—I know you wouldn't worry over a dangerous man; but there's—I don't know"—closing his book on a finger in the place and leaning forward earnestly—"I can't tell you what it is, but it seems like there's something about you I don't understand. Ever since that night we had to put into his harbor, it's seemed like there was—something between us, Jenny."

"Something between us? Why, you old rooster, you don't mean anything I do 's making you unhappy, do you?"—voice trembling with concern.

"Me unhappy? The only way you could ever make me unhappy would be to be unhappy yourself or to do something that would be unworthy of you, Jenny. You know that. I've thought you were worried and hiding what worried you so it wouldn't upset me. That'd be like you. And because you couldn't sleep that night in Indian Harbor, I thought maybe it was the stories you'd heard about Eldred."

"Do I look like a woman to be upset by fairy-tales?"—driving the husk out of her voice with a forced belligerence. "I guess not! You're mooning, Ned; you need a dose of sulphur and molasses." She shifted her big bulk on the chair and sniffed contemptuously. "He may be called bad by folks round here, but I've yet to see a black-whiskered devil who'd scare me!"

Borden smiled, but he was not satisfied.

Jen rocked again when he stepped to the door and looked out to see that the light burned properly.

"If I was to set out, now, to make you uneasy, just what would you recommend me to do?" she asked gruffly. "The time may come, dearie, when I want to devil you, and just what would you recommend?"

"You're making fun of me."

"I'm making talk on a lonesome night."

Borden placed a marker in his book and stretched and yawned.

"Oh, you could lie to me or you could do something dishonorable. That is, another woman could; you couldn't——"

"Go 'long with you!" she said, but there was trouble in her heart. "Lying would do it, eh? Or something dishonorable?"

Borden was not particularly interested in this discussion of a possible provocation of his distrust, and though Aunt Jen tried in a clumsy manner at intervals to continue talk on the point, conversation rambled into less speculative affairs. It did not lag, however; their talks never did. They had enough in common and enough diversity in points of view to interest one another, and there were few silences.

THE contentment, with its rare suggestion of romance, had come to both after years of loneliness. Borden had entered the service when the lights were few and primitive. He had been reared on the shore of Lake Ontario, but assignment took him into the St. Lawrence River, where he served through his young manhood and into middle life. He was competent, conscientious and liked responsibility; he was a keeper at thirty, and many a season thereafter he was privileged to wear the efficiency star, badge of faultless performance of duty.

He was not worried about pay or pension; he saved always, and men who worked with him knew that he invested what little he could put by. He had but one extravagance, and this was the purchase of books on theology and volumes of sermons. In the years he had accumulated a sizable library of these which he reread slowly, carefully and, it is likely, with good understanding. A Christian, Norman Eldred had heard of him, and all men recognized a fine spirit in the keeper, but there was yet to be one who had heard cant from his lips or who had been urged to change his manner of life. Borden's religion was a personal matter with him, not to be boasted of, not to find outlet in dictation to other men. His business was to guide ships, and he let the spiritual misadventures of men alone.

Early in that last decade in which the white wings of sailing craft vied with the coming of steam to the Great Lakes, "Red Jenny" was well known from Superior to Buffalo—just "Red Jenny" to most men, marine cook, with personality and temper, and a tongue and a quantity of blazing red hair which had given her the name.

She was of the lakes wholly; so it caused speculation when the thing happened which sent her ashore and established her as mistress of a sailors' rest, a Buffalo boarding-house.

THE early history of her establishment was no different from that of many another water-front boarding-house in many another lake port. It was frankly and openly in its special class, without pretense or distinction except that the woman who operated it was headstrong and had certain rigid rules which she enforced. Then, too, there was her room off the kitchen and, at first, the sound of a child's voice there. Both room and infant were guarded without relaxation.

But of a sudden there came a face-about in the conduct of the sailors' rest. It was after a night when the mistress was heard crying behind her locked door, and the next morning at an unseasonable hour certain occupants went tumbling through the door, unceremoniously ejected. There were two women and a half-dozen men in this group.

That was the only time, it developed, that objectionable people were flung out of her boarding-house, due to that discrimination with which she accepted guests thereafter. Her place became known as respectable and, finally, unprofitable. The beds were clean, the meals splendid, but no drunken sailors were accepted, and no woman entered the door. Neither, it was casually remarked, was there sound of a child's voice. The clientele was limited indeed, and though Red Jenny was cook and clerk and chambermaid in one, she was finally forced to give up and to bend over a stove that was not her property.

She made her arrangements, and as the last thing went to the office of the rental agency to settle that obligation, she gave them a piece of her mind loudly and without regard for niceties.

"There's your blood-money!" she boomed. "I hope the devil himself 'll blister the heart of the party who owns that shack that depends on whisky and women for profit!"

There were expostulations, of course, and the manager glanced apprehensively at the one other occupant of the room, a tall, well-boned man, in reefer and cap, who listened intently. Jen saw that man when she turned to go, and met his stare defiantly.

A week later, in her new place, she saw him again. The man became regular at his table, and before long he spoke to the cook, saying, without preface:

"I hope you don't mind being followed up. I sort of liked what you said about the guilt of a certain person."

Jen was about to retort bruskly, but his honesty and gentleness checked her, and instead she mumbled an evasive reply and talked of other things. That night the man stayed on, and within a fortnight she had consented to be the wife of Ned Borden.

"You know me?" she asked tremulously, when he asked her to go with him. "Red Jenny?"

"I know enough."

"Mebbe you think you do. You've got to know everything. Now, listen." She began at the beginning then and talked, revealing her life completely, resolutely, and it was not until she appreciated his fine understanding and the genuine greatness of his heart that her courage failed and she stopped—just before she had reached the one thing which she held lowest of all. She tried to go on and could not. She put it off and was married, and tried again a number of times, and failed, and locked the secret in her breast, dreading the consequences of its revelation.

It was remarked on the lakes that Red Jenny, the bellowing shrew, had married that fellow from down the St. Lawrence and that she was quite changed. Men laughed when they heard this. Red Jenny, the wife of that soft-spoken deacon! He'd bitten off a sweet mouthful, he had! But their skeptical prophecies did not materialize, and Red Jenny became "Aunt Jen," as loud as ever, perhaps, but with a great heart close behind her bruskness.

This changed life could not change one impulse in the woman, and that was to excel. Instead of dominating men and being recognized as an outstanding figure among sailing people, she now took up the matter of dress, and although most of the time she was on lonely lights, she devoted more energy to the matter of clothes than a débutante. She studied fashion magazines and shopped with fervor when given the opportunity, and sewed hours at a time when not on watch, because she soon earned herself a recognized place in the service. Most of her spare time was spent in cutting and stitching, or in altering the many clothes which hung unused for months at a time.

Since their coming to Squaw Island, Aunt Jen had employed the machine regularly. It was to her like drug to an addict, and when her nerves were in a jangle, it was the manufacture of garments which would steady them. Also, when she was bent low and apparently absorbed in her work, none could see a reflection of that misgiving and fright which was in her heart.

To-night there were indications of a growing restlessness while she talked, but she kept to her chair until the thin whistle of the returning supply-boat came to them.

Jen followed her husband to the water's edge and took from Larsen the bundle of mail he had received at St. James. She went back to the house while the two men drew the boat up its slide and tore the wrapper from a magazine. She spread it on the table, scanning with great interest the slight, hollow-chested young woman who adorned the cover of *Up-to-Date Modes* and who was attired with all the elegance of contemporary dressmaking art. There was admiration in Jen's eyes for the lines of the figure which she could never have, and with a movement as of resignation she riffled the pages until she came to a department headed: "The Stylish Stout." Then she sat down and propped her head on her hand and read diligently.

She did not look up when the two men entered, though the Dane was talking almost excitedly. Ned interrupted him.

"What do you think 's happened, Jenny?"

She put a finger on the paragraph she had been reading and turned her head:

"They're going to wear 'em to their heels for one thing; what else?"

"Remember that trader, MacKinnon? Well, he's kidnaped the girl."

The finger which had held Jen's place dragged across the page as if pulled by a great weight; the hand fell over the edge of the table into her lap.

"Say that again," she said sharply.

"You tell her, Pete"—turning to his assistant. "Go back to the first. There's the hand of the Almighty in this somewhere."

"Well, I was 'use comin' down from das store when Gam Gallagher he coom oop an' tole about young MacKinnon," he began, and then recited at length the tale that Gam had taken to St. James that afternoon.

WHILE he talked with a small measure of excitement showing through his natural stolidity, Jen sat tense and tight-lipped, following his every syllable. She did not move except for a clenching of the hand that had dropped into her lap, but her gray eyes, fixed on the Dane's face, were alive—alive with something more than interest, with alarm, perhaps—perhaps with anxiety. She was as one who has waited for long, half in horror, half in impatience for some specific happening, and it was as though the story which Pete told was the thing which she had anticipated.

He finished with a short laugh.

"Eferyboty say Eltret, it serfes him right," he said. "He bane crazy aboot das gel, an' now he ain't got her aany more."

"The hand of the Almighty," repeated Ned solemnly.

"Yah. Das iss it. He had it coomin'—sure!"

And then Jen shifted sharply in her chair and leaned forward.

"And you say this young MacKinnon's got her down on High Island alone?"

"Yah. 'Use him an' der Indians."

"And he's keeping her there against her will?"

"Yah; das what Gam said"—nodding enthusiastically. "She helped wreck his fadder, an' she teast him away froom hiss hooker when her old man set her afire. Serfes her right, by gosh!"

"Oh, the poor dearie!" Jen rose and moved about aimlessly, letting one hand rise and fall repeatedly into the palm of the other. "The poor dearie! There alone with him— And did Gam say that he'd—" She broke the question as her voice caught. Then, stopping before Jensen, "He ain't harmed her, has he, Pete?"

The other flicked the ash from his cigar.

"By gosh, I dunno! She's dere alone with him."

"Oh, that dearie! There alone with him! Ned, ain't that tough?" Her husband started to comment, but she went on: "Still, he didn't look like a bad sort and he didn't *seem* like a bad sort. That morning he done his wash before he done anything else, and when a man's clean—Oh dear!"

Ned put a hand on her shoulder.

"Jenny, don't take on like this. It's likely she's all right, and, anyhow, you don't even know the girl——"

"Know her?" she burst out. "*Know* her!"—looking up with a blaze of fury through her tears. "Ain't I—ain't she"—her voice weakening as her husband stared at her with amazement—"ain't she a human being? Ain't she in trouble, and ain't I the nearest woman to her?"

It was all too evident that this sense of general obligation was not the thing which had been in her mind when she interrupted her husband. The contrast between her hard-flung challenge and the subsequent questions was too great to cover that truth. Ned doubted, too. He looked closely into her face.

"Yes; you're the nearest woman to her, Jenny. You're right. We must help her if we can."

Pete rose to go to his own quarters, but before he had exchanged the briefest of good-nights with the keeper, Jen had left the room and was back with a bolt of white goods under her arm. She dropped it to the table, dragged her sewing-machine closer to the lamp with great vigor, produced shears and patterns and fell to work.

"Sewing this time of night?" Ned asked.

"Tarnation, yes! It's my watch in an hour, and that dearie probably didn't take a stitch with her except what she had on her blessed back." She smoothed out the pattern muttering, "She can't be more 'n a thirty-four."

Ned climbed the tower to the room where the lamp burned in its nest of lenses, where the silent machinery revolved, making the fixed red light wink with a deeper crimson at regular intervals. He timed the mechanism with a stop-watch and went down again slowly.

When he entered the room where he had left his wife, he was greeted by the click of the foot clamped down on her cloth. She spun the wheel with her hand, and then, leaning heavily on the machine with both arms, face close to the zipping needle, drove the device at high speed, intent on her work. And long after Ned Borden, whose watch ended at midnight, went to bed, the machine whirred on, driven at a speed which made the very building vibrate.

Now and then it was halted while the woman smoothed out patterns and wielded her shears and mumbled to herself while holding thread and pins in her lips. After these intervals, she would go back to the machine once more, still mumbling.

At half-hour intervals she got up and went outside, looked upward at the beacon and across the lake at the weather, for she was in charge now, and nothing, not even the turmoil in her heart, could make her relax her vigilance which would guide mariners who might be out there. Except for two instances, her work was otherwise uninterrupted.

The first of these was when, with an explosive "Tarnation!" which sent pins showering from her mouth, Jen stopped her machine and searched irritably for a handkerchief, wiped her eyes and blew her nose with vigor. The next break was of a longer duration, when she sat back in her chair, stout arms folded, and stared blankly before her, chin unsteady now and then. Tears came this time, also, but they were unheeded until she muttered aloud:

"And I've lied to him and done a dishonorable thing! And my cowardly heart ain't got a drop of faith! Oh, Neddie, Neddie!" She clapped a hand over her mouth and gave way to a moment of bitter sobbing. Then she sniffed angrily, spun the wheel and resumed her feverish work.

It was dawn when she snipped the last thread and put the cover on her precious machine. She could hear the keeper stirring in their room.

"He'll know," she sighed. "He always knows when I'm upset, but I'm hanged if I ain't done a night's work for that dearie!"—patting the pile of nearly finished garments with pride.

BY THE time the story of MacKinnon's prank had reached the woman on the light, it had spread the length of Beaver Island, reaching the remote farm in the forest where a countryman of Jean Mosseau's eked out a living and where the Frenchman had taken refuge from the wrath of Norman Eldred.

When his friend brought that word to him, Mosseau shoved his cap at a rakish angle and thrust his hands into his waistband

and swaggered about the room, his eyes dancing.

"So!" He laughed. "So she iss no longair wit' Keeng Norman! An' she iss on High Islan'; an' de trader he iss not so smart— Jean she owes heem wan grudge, too! Eef Jean she not be drunk, yo'ng MacKinnon he be seek now, wit' broken bones—eh?"

He laughed again and twirled his mustache. He did not forget his grudges, nor the blows which David MacKinnon had rained on him. No more could he forget that he had openly defied the king of Garden Island.

And the next morning, Norman Eldred, seated at his desk, idle, silent, motionless, saw Dimmock come rapidly up from the beach. Dimmock had been in St. James that morning and had just returned; his haste denoted that he bore news of importance.

Though they had been together for years, sharing hardships and fortunes, and though Dimmock knew many of the secrets which Eldred held in his heart, there was ever between them that gulf which separates conscious master from conscious man, and when he entered the room, the red-haired fisherman closed the door and paused with that hesitancy which may indicate respect or fear or both.

Eldred turned in his swivel chair and fixed the other with that slowly focusing gaze—a gaze that Dimmock had never known until forty-eight hours ago. It was as though a deep sickness had fallen on the man. His eyes were not alert and alive and responsive as they had been. His step was slow; his speech was feeble. The reason for living had gone out of his life and taken his strength. For a moment he eyed Dimmock and then said, in a little more than a whisper,

"Well?"

On the word the other moved forward quickly and leaned on the desk, both hands gripping it.

"I thought you'd like to know. She's on High Island with him."

The spring of the swivel chair creaked sharply, though Eldred's outward movement was hardly perceptible. His eyelids sagged as though they would close; his head moved backward ever so slightly.

"On High Island—with—with——"

"Aye. With MacKinnon."

"And they know in St. James?"

"It's all they *do* know to-day."

"What else, Dimmock?"

The voice was louder and his question came almost sharply.

"That's about all. He's plannin' on keepin' her there, they say. She's all right, I guess, but he's holdin' her to get back at you. That's what he told Gallagher—to hit back at you, an' that's what they're sayin' on Beaver to-day. She's livin' in his house, an' he's goin' on with his trapnets." He had spoken quickly and stopped short. "That's all," he finished, and stood erect.

Eldred reached out for a corner of the desk and pulled himself from the chair. He turned toward the window and, hands clasped behind his back, head slightly hung, he stared out across the dancing lake to where the two humps of High Island showed in the distance. Dimmock stood still, waiting. Then Eldred turned his head.

"I'm not afraid of him." A simply stated and simple sentence, but it was a shock to the other, because Eldred had deemed it necessary, and that shock showed in the man's china-blue eyes.

"I'm not afraid of him," Eldred repeated, voice rising, quivering slightly. One hand at his side opened and closed slowly. "Damn him!"—in a whisper. "Damn him! I'm not afraid!"

AND then that was revealed to Dimmock which he had never dreamed: Norman Eldred knew the fear of another man. After those years of ruthlessness and heartlessness and unbroken triumph, he was afraid! It showed in his speech now, in the assertion of fearlessness which was only an indication of the craven in his heart. It showed in his face, too, and in the roving of his tongue along his lips.

Dimmock said,

"No. Sure not!"

"No. Sure not!" Eldred repeated his man's words and then walked the length of the room, steadier than he had been yesterday, pace quickening as his excitement grew. He came back. "Listen to me! If you think or any man on this island or any man on the lakes thinks I'm afraid of him, I'll—I'll"—he drew the one clenched hand up to a level of his chin and stared at it—"I'll

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ruin him—as I'll ruin this trader before I get through!"

"Sure you'll spoil him! We all know that."

Dimmock himself was afraid now to see his master trying to cover with such hollow braggadocio that very evident misgiving.

"I'll ruin him—when the time comes, but that time isn't now. There's one thing to do now, and that's to bring her back—now—to-day! You understand that?" He looked about dully for a moment as though bewildered by his inability to think in terms of action. "He must not harm her! To prevent that I'll hold back, I'll be gentle, I'll even be humble, Dimmock." There was relief in his manner now. He had found a way, an excuse, a plan whereby to slip past acknowledgment of this fear and attain his end.

"He wouldn't dare——"

"He *would* dare! He's a fool, and a fool will dare anything. He dared me, didn't he? He came here and defied me. A man who'll do that—would harm her"—rage congesting in his throat to make his voice thick. He paced again, and Dimmock watched, his heart hammering. "Here"—halting with a gesture—"here it is: We'll go gently so she will be safe, as gently as you'd carry precious eggs—or dynamite! Yes; dynamite. We'll be humble; we'll admit—to him only—that we're beaten." He advanced and took the front of Dimmock's shirt between thumb and forefinger, shaking it slowly. "You go now. You find MacKinnon, wherever he is, at his work, ashore, in St. James—wherever he is. You find him to-day! Hear that?"

"Sure! To-day."

"You find him and you tell him this." He looked away, tongue on his lips. "No; you *ask* him this—ask him when and where he will talk with me, when and where he will—treat with me. Put it that way, Dimmock, in your own words. Let him think he has me beaten; let him think he has me down, and that I've had enough—hear? Understand that? Make it strong, but not too strong. He'll know what I want to talk about. Ask him when and where— Only, it's got to be to-day, because—" The hand which had grasped Dimmock's shirt dropped to his side and then went slowly behind his back, clasping the other. He averted his eyes so that his gaze went down upon his harbor, the heart of his little kingdom. "There's only one thing I fear, and that's being without her—" It was again the voice of a sick man, and he looked back at Dimmock and nodded with that melancholy again in his face. "I'm not ashamed of that. You know. You've been here; you've watched her grow up, too. You know that the roots of her life are tangled round my heart-strings. To tear her away from me—" His hand sought his side and clenched there, fingers gripping the flesh. "I thought that night when she turned on me, when she crossed me and protected the man who had—humiliated her, that it was only anger. I meant it, then, that I was through. I thought I could put her out of my life. That is what I thought when I told her to go."

HE DREW a great, unsteady breath and searched the face before him as if in desperation, as a man who, for the first time in his experience, needs sympathy and knows that all sources of sympathy are closed to him. He realized at last the prodigality with which he had frittered his human relationships and for lack of that one touch he was compensating for all that he had won. He did not find response he needed in Dimmock, and something like a cynical smile played about his mouth.

"That is what I thought—that I could do without her. And I was wrong. I get what I want, Dimmock—I always have—and now I want her more than I want this beat in here"—a hand on his breast.

He turned away abruptly, as though he could say no more, and went to the desk to seat himself again, but before it he steadied and his voice came firm and deliberate again, perhaps a bit forced, but no longer faltering and husked.

"That is why I can be clever instead of strong for an hour; that is why I can humble myself. I need her so. And if I'm to have her back unharmed, I—" He cut off with a quick gesture of dismissal. "You understand. . Go, now!"

He sat down stiffly as the man went out with no delay, relieved at being away from his master.

Norman Eldred wants his daughter back. But will he get her? See the next instalment of this absorbing serial in January Everybody's—out December 15th

Little Journeys Back Home

The Best Fun Yet

Remember When You Wanted That Dog—Just Had to Have Him—and You Got Him and Maybe a Bunch of Trouble Thrown In?

By Henry Francis Granger

Illustration by Harry Fisk

THERE had been a week of rain in a cold May, and then the sun burst forth with the power of mid-June. Almost overnight the trees were in full leaf, the tulips open along the borders, and hope, resurrected, shining in illimitable promise.

To Bobby and Theodore the week of gloom had held but one ray of light, and at times this had flickered and almost died as they stared out upon a sodden world. They had been promised real fly-fishing outfits and the orders had gone in—but suppose it should rain all summer?

A small boy can believe anything if he wants to, but he becomes a skeptic when bored and a hopeless pessimist when thwarted, and once plunged in the gloom of despondency, nothing but a new interest can lift him to the light.

So even when, on Friday, the sun shone with the promise of clearing weather, it failed to rouse Bobby and Theodore to consideration of the Saturday holiday, for the new casting-rods could not be expected for days yet and no other interest had intervened.

But when Theodore appeared, late Saturday morning, with his old fish-pole over his shoulder, his suggestion opened Bobby's eyes to the surpassing beauty of existence. Not that sucker-fishing was anything new to them, but now it came as something to be done where there was nothing to do, and it brought the lure and fascination of accumulative memories.

Bobby greeted Theodore's advent with a shout of joy, and directly they were digging bait at the edge of the garden.

"Gee! Ain't it great?" Bobby drew forth a reluctant angleworm.

"Bet the suckers'll bite to-day," panted Theodore, digging feverishly.

Bobby, breaking the overturned lumps in his fingers, searching out the elusive fat ones, grinned up in full assent.

From the barn-gable a robin poured out his soul in song. Two bluebirds were billing like miniature doves upon the clothes-reel. Even the hired girl, who shuffled out under the burden of a heaped basket of family wash and frightened the bluebirds away, reflected the renewed promise of the returning sun and called to the boys in friendly greeting.

"Gee! Maggie's got over her grouch," muttered Bobby, and he called back confidently, "Goin' to bring home a mess of suckers this time, Maggie."

"I'll cook 'em for ye!" she shouted back.

They had spaded over an area of garden that as a task would have taken them half a day when Theodore, straightening up, peered into the can in Bobby's hand.

"Guess we've got bait 'nuff," he said cheerfully. And then, with fish-poles over their shoulders, they hurried away.

The river, still higher than it would be in summer, had subsided to friendly, familiar form, its banks flood-scarred, steaming warmly, greening under the compelling heat. In the air was a nebulous spiciness.

"Gee! Can't you jes' feel it?" cried Bobby.

"Feel what?" the more stoical Theodore asked indifferently.

"Oh, jes'—jes' everythin'," said Bobby vaguely; but he stood as one poised, straining at some invisible leash.

"Huh; the whole town's fishin' to-day," grumbled Theodore, as they scrambled along the river-bank, seeking unoccupied space sufficient for both.

"Look at this, you guys!" A grinning youngster was pridefully lifting a string of suckers.

"Gee! Hope you ain't got 'em all," worried Bobby.

"Lots more if you know how to catch 'em." The successful youngster was calmly patronizing.

THE river-bank bristled with set poles. For the most part, the fishermen stood above their lines, the butts of the poles thrust in the soft earth, a crotched stick or a stone the fulcrum for the overhanging length from which the line dangled, swaying to a bobbing cork. Bobby and Theodore found an open space between two other anglers, wide enough to accommodate both, and directly hooks were baited and poles set.

Then, for the first time, they stood back in full content. All the details of preparation, the walk to the river, the location of a site had gone forward under the strain of impatience. Bobby's eyes swept the river and lifted to the hills, drinking in beauty.

"Gee! It's great!" he whispered, which meant nothing in particular and yet everything—the acme, content.

"Can't be beat!" answered Theodore, with no suspicion that he voiced a tremendously solemn truth.

By mid-afternoon each had secured a sizable string of fish, and they proudly carried them home, thrilling with a sense of worthy achievement that was in nowise diminished by the knowledge that neither they or any other would care to eat them.

"Suppose this is the last time we'll go sucker-fishin'." There was a note of regret in Bobby's voice.

"Who wants to fish for suckers?" cried Theodore scornfully. "We'll show the bunch what real fishin' is when our castin'-rods come. My dad says castin's an art."

Bobby understood as little as Theodore about the art of fly-fishing, but he felt it incumbent upon him to endorse this untried sport with all the loyalty of his ignorance.

"You bet you! Anybody that ain't too lazy to dig the bait can catch suckers on a old pole, but we'll show 'em somethin' different."

Theodore nodded vigorous agreement, and this was their valediction to the old, joyous pole-fishing days.

The fly-fishing outfits arrived Tuesday, and each afternoon thereafter Bobby King's back steps were carefully strewn with things that would have delighted the soul of the gentle Isaak Walton. There were shiny fly-rods, bright reels, silken lines, leaders and snell-hooks, landing-nets and creels, everything save the books of flies.

Bobby's rod was a split bamboo and Theodore's a lancewood equally slender and complete. Under no consideration would they have had the rods alike. Had they been alike, success or failure in varying degree must have been attributed to individual skill or the lack; now the argument would rest upon the relative merits of their equipment—a vastly more intimate and friendly basis.

Each afternoon, after school, they practised casting over the close-cropped grass of Bobby's yard. In the beginning they had cast awkwardly, with anxious care. Accustomed to the stiff strength of their fishing-poles, they were nervously apprehensive of the delicate flexibility of these dainty rods.

"Gee, The'dore! Don't seem 'sif they could hold a fish." Awe rather than doubt spoke in Bobby's voice.

"They wouldn't if you jerked 'em like an old fish-pole. You got to play 'em steady. My dad says there's fishermen who can land a man with one of them rods."

"Gee! I wonder if we'll ever get good as that."

"Shucks! It ain't nothin'—only bein' careful."

In his mind, Theodore had solved all the problems to his own satisfaction as over the broad reach of Bobby's back yard he practised casting to the point of complete confidence. Because the hook landed safely and the line reeled smoothly in, the fact that the cast rarely reached the particular spot at which it had been aimed was a detail of so little importance as to escape mention.

They had followed the directions laid down in the thin handbook of rules on casting that came with the outfits, and by Friday afternoon they were as calmly assured of their technic as a recent graduate of a correspondence-school in short-story writing.

AND then time again began to drag for Bobby and Theodore. They were ready, and to-morrow, Saturday, they would wet the new lines for the first time; but, ready to go—even to the angleworms carefully packed in moist earth—an interminable time must lapse before that to-morrow could dawn.

And then another interest intervened to comfort them. This object lay upon the ground just beyond the bounds of their fly-casting field. To the casual glance it might have appeared an armful of excelsior or a bundle of colored rags, but more careful scrutiny would have disclosed the fact that it was covered with hair, and that from either extremity of the cylindrical body were two short protuberances not unlike half-blown yellow chrysanthemums. But as the object sprawled upon the ground, the same careful scrutiny could no more have determined which end was front than it could have located with certainty the head-end of a stationary caterpillar.

This unusual object was Bobby's recently acquired dog, and he now remained quietly at a distance because, after having repeatedly snarled himself in their lines, he had been securely anchored to a tree.

There was wide divergence of opinion among the dog-fanciers of the village as to the ancestry of this dog. Upon two points these experts were agreed—that it was a domesticated carnivorous mammal, and that they had never before seen one like him. Further than this here was little unanimity, beyond the common belief that an English sheep-dog and a Scotch collie had most clearly impressed their characteristics, but as to the other intermingling blood-strains, there were as many opinions as experts. One peaceably disposed citizen almost brought the debaters in accord by the suggestion that all were right, but when the blacksmith, who had previously remained out of the discussion, advanced his arguments in support of his belief that, despite the dog's shaggy coat and heavy poundage, there was also a dachshund strain, the prospect of agreement grew as dim as the hope for a League of Nations or peace in Ireland.

But now thought of the dog suggested an interest that, for a time, occupied the boys' minds in forgetfulness of lagging clocks.

"Gee! We ain't found a name for him yet, The'dore," recollected Bobby, starting forward to release the tethered dog. It could not be called a new thought, for the dog's name had been a moot question for a fortnight.

"I suggested two or three names," complained Theodore.

"Yes; but I want a good name—a unusual one." Bobby's brow puckered in a frown of concentration. "Guess I'll call him 'Prince.'"

"Short for 'footprints,' I suppose?" Bobby's father had come out behind him.

"Aw, no; not footprints—" the boy's protesting voice broke off abruptly.

"Wouldn't be such a bad name," chuckled Theodore, pointing to the chrysanthemum paws.

"Illuminatingly descriptive," murmured Mr. King.

"Aw, you don't care if I never find a good name," grumbled Bobby.

"Why not call him 'Gyp?'" suggested his father gravely. But the suggestion brought an added frown to Bobby's face.

"Gee! You think he's jes a common dog."

"Common, but uncommon," murmured his father.

"What'd you say?"

"An uncommon dog, son."

"Well, princes ain't common, either," argued Bobby.

The father laughed, in full understanding that a name had been decided upon. Just as surely as an ancestral line of consanguinity marks a prince, its absence marks the sort of dog a boy must name "Prince."

"I'm goin' to call him 'Prince,'" announced Bobby, after a thoughtful pause.

"He's the sort of dog you just have to call 'Prince,'" agreed his father. And so the dog was named.

SATURDAY morning dawned at last, and the two boys, with their new fishing-tackle and accompanied by Prince, set out for the trout-stream. In the boys' minds these dainty outfits marked the beginning of a new era. They felt that the brook-drenched, mud-bespattered, bush-torn and mosquito-bitten moil of their pole-fishing days were things of the past, left behind forever with the clumsy old fish-poles. Heretofore, fishing had meant the wearing of their oldest, most disreputable garments, with broken shoes from which the water would readily escape, or clumsy rubber boots. But no more of this tramp array. Trout-fishing with these delectable new rods was the decorous, cleanly sport of grown-ups, calling for attire in harmony with the refinement of their accouterment.

And so this day Bobby and Theodore were decked out in the spotless clothes and neat shoes of semiformal occasions; the only thing about them reminiscent of the old order was the box of angleworms. Now, as they always had done, they would use angleworms for bait. There was the authority of the thin handbook that one might do better with bait than with artificial flies thus early in the season, and there was also their strong prediliction for the former. They knew all about angleworms, nothing about artificial flies.

The lower rim of the sun was just lifting above the crest of Tobe's Hill as Bobby and Theodore turned down Main Street, their new creels packed with all the accessories, including lunches, swinging from their shoulders, the unjointed rods, slim and light, nestling in their hands.

"Gee! It's easy to carry these things," murmured Bobby, conscious of but one regret—that no one was about so early to see them go.

From the edge of town they struck out along the highway that wound through the valleys to Line Brook. It was a long distance to Line Brook by the road, but there was a shorter way—over the hills and through the woods—that they had always taken before, but that was in the old time, when they had gone dressed for rough trails and short cuts, but now they were fishing as men fished, and, like men, they must sedately follow the highway.

And they followed the highway contentedly enough for a mile or more, and then the smooth monotony of the way grew irksome.

"Gee, The'dore! It's more fun goin' over the hills."

"You're the one suggested gettin' all dolled up," retorted Theodore, and for a time they walked in silence.

The road was hot and dusty, while they knew where, upon the hills, the arbutus trailed its spreading fragrance, and along the short cut there was lure even in the rank green bulbs of the skunk-cabbage and in the white flowers of the bloodroot that stained and withered and were not worth the plucking. But they liked to see them growing, to walk among them over the wet, spongy places they knew, where one could jounce up and down and set the bushes quivering for yards around. And they knew where the smooth green shoots of sassafras grew on the hills and where the leaves of the sweetflag stood stiff yet tight-rolled, like green paper spills, in boggy meadows. And thought of all these stirred them to unrest, for these were of the things that made the day's fishing a joy, even though there were no fish, and these things were not along the highway.

But when they reached the point where they were to leave the road and strike across the fields to the brook, their gloom lifted.

"Gee! It's good to get away from that old road," said Bobby.

"Roads always seem longer," remarked Theodore, complacent now that the goal was almost in sight. But on the last lap across a boggy pasture lot, the lush, dew-drenched grass soaked the light shoes they wore as thoroughly as wading the brook could have done.

"Gosh, Bobby! We should have worn our rubber boots or somethin'." It was annoying, even disconcerting, to find themselves bedraggled, much in the old manner, even before the real beginning.

"Guess maybe we'll have to get regular fishin'-boots," said Bobby vaguely.

But as they stood on the sunny bank of the stream and joined their rods and strung the lines through the brass guides to the ends of the flexible tips, clumsy, unpractised fingers struggling with the coiling twist of dry leaders and the sticking perversity of snell-hooks, they forgot disquieting things and concentrated in anticipation of the wonderful new experiences ahead. With these new rods, catching trout would be vastly easier than it had ever been before.

For a time Prince had loitered near as they adjusted their tackle, and then he had wandered off to investigate the blackbirds returning to the rushes at the edge of a tag-alder patch. And now he was back, sitting upon his haunches between them, waiting their next move. But Prince's was not the calm dignity of an old dog. There was a tenseness back of his most lounging attitude, expressing itself in short barks of impatience if no attention were paid to him, and changing him at a friendly word from an anticipatory dog to a boneless bunch of undulating energy.

"Gee! He's got lots of pep," said Bobby admiringly.

"He wriggles too darn much." A few moments before, Prince had nearly upset Theodore in one of his sudden paroxysms, and the boy was still trying to work out the hook deep-buried in the edge of his coat.

"You can't expect him to keep still all the time," Bobby defended.

"You gotta be still to catch trout," grumbled Theodore. But the hook extracted at last and baited, Theodore was ready for the first cast. He stepped forward and swung the rod in a wide arc, aiming at a quiet pool at the edge of the opposite bank. The worm-baited hook sailed through the air, lifting high above the narrow stream to come to rest in the spiny top of a thorn-apple bush far back on the other bank.

"What you doin'?" cried Bobby, amazed.

Theodore, no less surprised at the unexpected result, was coolly reeling in his line.

"You got to be careful with these rods—can't jerk 'em with a lot of line out," he remarked judicially, as he wound in the slack until the rod was bending alarmingly under the pull from the reel.

"Look out! You'll bust it!" shouted Bobby.

Theodore, leading forward at the edge of the brook to relieve the strain on the line, was trying to free his hook by a succession of cautious tugs.

"Golly! I'm snagged for fair," he admitted mournfully.

"You'll have to go over and get it loose, 'less you'll bust somethin'," cautioned Bobby.

But the brook was wider than Theodore could jump and deeper than he cared to wade in his good shoes, so he continued to jerk hopefully.

"You'll never get loose 'less you go over, and you'll have to cross way down below, 'less you scare all the fish." Bobby was becoming annoyed at the delay.

"Come hold my rod."

"Why don't you lay it down?"

"Can't. Ain't no place," mourned Theodore. It never occurred to either that they could let the reel run and so gain sufficient line to permit the rod to be laid upon the bank.

And so Bobby put down his own rod and took the other, leaning forward with outstretched arm to lessen the strain upon the tip, while Theodore walked back downstream, seeking a place to cross over.

BELOW, it was soft and boggy along the brook, and then it wound through a tangle of bushes with a sprinkling of swamp-oak trees and here and there unpleasant leafy pools that must be cautiously skirted, and, quite in the old manner, the hungry mosquitoes were swarming upon him. But Theodore kept on, searching for a place to cross upon stones or a log, and getting as wet in the seeking as he would have been had he waded boldly. And this is what he finally did, running back along the opposite bank.

"Gosh! I just about ruined my school-shoes!" he called to the arm-weary Bobby.

"Wonder you wouldn't have chased clear back to town," complained Bobby.

"Guess I got the worst of it." Theodore was breaking the branch to which his hook was fastened, and, untangled at last, he came to the bank. "Guess I'll fish from this side till there's a good place to cross."

"That's the best way." Bobby was reeling in the released line. With the hook snugly drawn to the end of the tip, he reached the rod across to Theodore.

"Can't get it that way. It'll get the handle all wet when you leggo." Theodore's fingers released the flexible end by which he had attempted to lift the heavier butt.

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"Can't reach it the other way round, either. Gosh, The'dore! We been here an hour an' we ain't fishin' yet."

"Aw, we got lots of time." Theodore had trouble of his own. "Can't you chuck that rod—careful—butt first?"

This Bobby did, and shortly they were again ready to attempt to fish.

PRINCE, who had started off with Theodore but returned before he forded the brook, now sat expectantly at Bobby's feet. Bobby, who had reeled in his own line until but a short length dangled from the tip, prepared to cast carefully lest he repeat Theodore's error. He shivered apprehensively at the spring of the rod as he swung it, but the bait landed fairly in midstream, and Prince sprang after it.

Short legs submerged, the water reaching up half-way on his long body, the puppy sought for the thing that had splashed before him, barking excitedly.

"Gee!" moaned Bobby, clinging to the rod with palsied fingers.

"Look out! You'll hook him if you jerk it away!" wailed Theodore.

Bobby was shouting frantically to the dog, carefully drawing the hook away from him through the water, but Prince floundered after the line where it cut the surface of the stream.

"Oh, gosh! Look out!" shrilled Theodore, running along the bank.

Panic-stricken Bobby swung the rod with a frantic swish, jerking the hook from the water just beyond the leaping puppy's nose, to bring up with the leader wrapped round the limb of a tree. The hook was safely beyond the dog's reach, but equally beyond Bobby's.

"Now what am I goin' to do?" he called.

"You oughta have left that darn dog home," sputtered Theodore. In his heedless run along the bank, he had again snarled his own line in the bushes.

Prince, who had scrambled out, sat on his haunches under the tree and barked at the dangling hook.

"I've a mind to skin you!" Sorely tempted to beat him, Bobby reached for the dog's collar.

Prince wagged an appreciative tail but kept his eye on the hook. So far, the puppy liked this game.

"Ain't no use hammerin' him!" called Theodore, who had got untangled, this time with little difficulty.

"How'm I goin' to get that line down? I can't reach it, and that measly limb won't hold me," fretted Bobby.

"What good's it goin' to do to get it down if that darn dog's goin' to chase it?" asked Theodore gloomily.

But Bobby was pulling steadily upon the line, and, as is the way with a trout-line when seemingly inextricably involved, the smooth leader slowly slipped round, unwinding from the limb and coming clear without catching the hook. And before the quivering Prince could spring upon it, Bobby had him by the collar.

"No use throwin' in here again," called Theodore, who had been an interested spectator.

"No; Prince's chased all the fish out of here," Bobby agreed. "We got to go on further."

They had selected a comparatively open space for the casts that had ended so unsatisfactorily, and directly beyond the brook wound through a tangle of bushes and small trees. They knew where other open pools lay farther on, and started hopefully.

"We ought to be wadin', as we used to do!" called Theodore, after having been snarled to a stop some dozen times in the first hundred feet.

Bobby, upon his side of the brook, was making equally slow and laborious progress. It seemed impossible to keep the quivering tip of the rod from entanglement with leaves and branches.

"Carry the darn thing butt first; it goes better!" he called to Theodore.

"Huh! Do you call this fishin'?" Theodore growled back in deep disgust. But at last they came to another open space and baited their hooks with fresh worms.

"Here's a bully place!" called Bobby softly.

"You bet!" Theodore was closing his bait-box with trembling fingers. "Just you hold on to that darn dog."

Clinging to Prince's collar with one hand, Bobby thrust out his rod with a short line, carefully allowing the bait to sink below the surface of the water. Theodore essaying a more spectacular cast, caught upon a bush behind him.

And then the hoped-for, which was also

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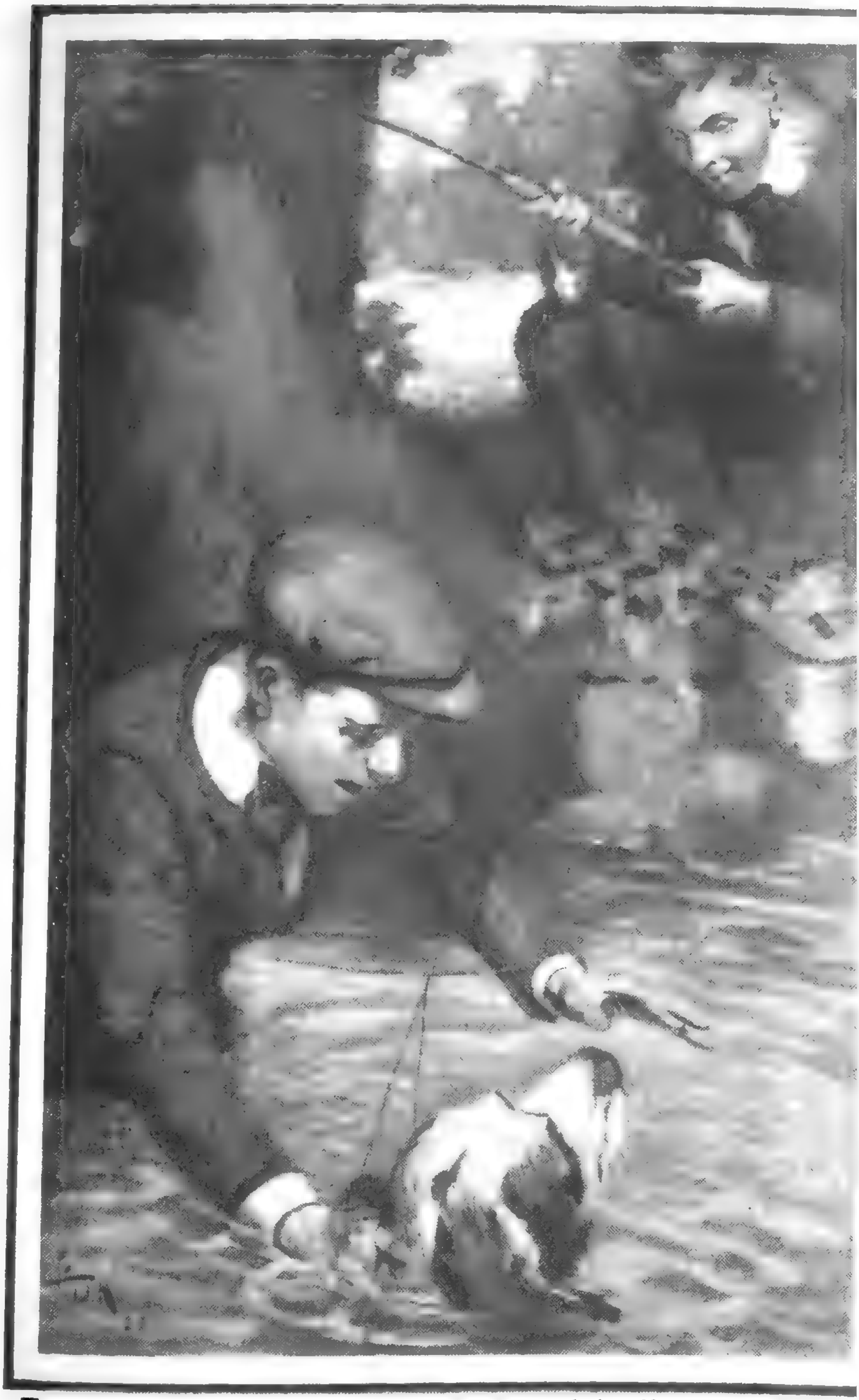


There was a wild mêlée of excited dog and frantic boy in a swirl of muddying water, and a twiste snarl of fish-line.

the entirely unexpected, happened. A trout took Bobby's bait, and in the unconscious reflex of sheer surprise, Bobby struck, fastening it securely.

Upon the old pole, Bobby would have recognized it as the bite of a small fish, but upon this quivering, flexible wisp of a rod it appeared a monster of weight and surprising energy.

"Gee!" he gasped. "I've got a whale!"

Theodore, abandoning his still entangled line, rushed to the bank.

"Play it!" he shouted. "Give him plenty of line!" He darted back for his landing-net. "Don't let him get any slack!" He was back again, now on his knees, straining over the water with the landing-net. "Work him over this way where I can get him!"

The dog forgotten, Bobby clutched the rod in his left hand, the fingers of the right upon the handle of the reel. Quivering with excitement, now giving line, now reeling in, following the course of the darting fish, striving to heed Theodore's shouted advice, he was doing his best.

"Golly, Bobby! You've got the granddaddy of 'em all!" shouted Theodore.

And then the trout broke water, flashing into the sunlight to drop back with a splash of spray. To the excited imaginations of the boys, the fish appeared a yard long.

And so it may have appeared to Prince, for as the trout splashed back, the puppy struck with commendable accuracy upon the spot where it had disappeared.

There was a wild yell from Theodore and a strangled, inarticulate babble of words from Bobby; but Prince, in complete concentration, was again after the line as it cut through the water, here, now there, behind the darting fish.

And then, in one of its erratic flashes, the line became wound about the plunging dog, and the reel sang shrill as the rod jerked, bending and twisting in Bobby's hands.

"Catch him, The'dore! Grab him! He'll bust me all to pieces!" Bobby called frantically, clinging desperately to the rod. And Theodore valiantly plunged in after the dog.

There was a wild mêlée of excited dog and frantic boy and hopelessly flopping fish in a swirl of muddying water, and a twisted snarl of fish-line, from which Theodore emerged, wet, panting, dragging the protesting dog by his collar to the bank.

"Hang on to him!" wailed Bobby. "Line's all off the reel!"

"Cut it loose till we get out of this mess!" Theodore was clinging to the dog with both hands, and Prince was doing his best to get free with the full intention of going away from there.

Dancing about the struggling pair, with thought now only of the danger to his rod, Bobby managed to get out his knife and cut the line free. The released end slipped through the guides, and the rod was clear. With a gasp of relief, Bobby darted back to lay the rod in a place of safety, and then he joined Theodore in his efforts to disentangle the dog. It looked like a hopeless task, but in the end they succeeded in freeing Prince, although the line was left in a snarled mess, from the hook-end of which, miraculously preserved, protruded a six-inch trout.

Bobby gazed at it with incredulous eyes.

"Gee! It put up a fierce fight," he muttered. Memory of the battle, before Prince brought up reenforcements, thrilled him. It had certainly happened, but it was incomprehensible in the face of this insignificant cause. "Gee! I thought it was at least a foot long." And Bobby was still puzzled after the retrieved fish had gone into the creel.

But the trout held no interest for Theodore.

"Look at me!" He stood dripping muddy water.

"Gosh! It's fierce," sympathized Bobby. "We'll build a fire, and while you're dryin', I'll unsnarl that line."

"My own's snagged over'n that bush yet," mourned Theodore.

"Go get it. You won't get any wetter, and while you're doin' it, I'll build the fire."

LATER, with his trousers and stockings spread over a bush in position to benefit from both sun and fire, Theodore gloomily watched Bobby as he finished the trying job of unsnarling his line. Bobby straightened up at last, the neatly rewound reel in his hand.

"Gee! But we're lucky not to have busted somethin'."

"Lucky! You wouldn't say 'luck' if your next-to-best breeches was soaked like mine," growled Theodore.

"Aw—we got to learn, ain't we?"

"Learn what? Do you call this fishin'?" Theodore demanded truculently.

"'Course we ain't got fishin' good yet," admitted Bobby.

"Can't use no streak of lightnin' for a fish-pole, and you don't need no dog to hole 'em," said Theodore somberly.

Stretched on the sunny bank, Prince was watching from a safe distance. There was an air of alert expectancy about him that indicated he was not so much subdued as puzzled. These new playmates had treated him strangely. Theodore broke the silence that was becoming strained.

"Say, Bob; I'll bet that dog's part sea-lion or somethin'."

"Aw, shucks! He was jes' tryin' to help us, Theodore." The unfair aspersion banished the last fragment of Bobby's resentment, restoring Prince to full comradship. "Come here, old fellow!" And Prince came in a joyous, yelping rush.

Under the benign influence of sun and fire, Theodore was drying to content.

"We've got lots of time yet. Let's eat our lunch and start all fresh," he suggested, patting the dog's head in reconciliation.

And so they ate their lunch, sharing impartially with Prince, and later, in renewed hopefulness, set out along the brook.

BUT now Bobby and Theodore were apprehensive of difficulties not imagined in the beginning, and the nervous strain of manipulating those rods among the bushes, the aggravation of the seeming impossibility of casting to the spot at which they were aiming, the snarling disaster following every stumble or false motion wore upon them until they were tired and shaken. And, too, the sun was unconscionably hot, and the mosquitoes stuck to their sweaty faces with fierce persistence.

For an hour Bobby and Theodore had been eying each other furtively, each anxious to express himself yet hesitating to be first. Theodore had lost two snells, and the tip of his rod remained dejectedly bent. The most minute examination had failed to locate either crack or break, but, nevertheless, the tip failed to straighten. Bobby had lost innumerable hooks, and once he had been obliged to cut away leader, hook and considerable line to get free. Prince had long since lost interest in whatever they were trying to do and gone prospecting on his own account. And in Bobby's creel the solitary trout, grown dry and stiff, rattled lonesomely as he floundered along.

"Gee, The'dore! This is the toughest fishin' I ever saw."

"It's got my head achin' fierce."

And as though his last atom of energy had escaped with the admission, Theodore flopped limply upon the ground. Bobby dropped dejectedly beside him.

For a time the boys lay relaxed, half dozing in the heat. Although neither would be first to admit it, each was satiated with trout-fishing, gloomily discouraged as to the possibilities of fly-rods. And as they half dozed, faintly sounded the unmistakable yelping bark of Prince.

At first, engrossed in disquieting musings, Bobby and Theodore paid no heed, but the barking persisted.

"What do you suppose he's got?" asked Theodore finally.

"Maybe a young rabbit or woodchuck." Bobby found energy to sit up.

"Ain't it too early for 'em?"

"Don't believe 'tis. They's young ones around awful early sometimes." Bobby was on his feet now, striving to locate the faint but persistent barking.

"Let's leave our things here and go see what it is." Anything that promised relief from fishing without the necessity of admissions he was not yet ready to make was welcome to Theodore.

Leaning their rods against a tree and piling the rest of their equipment round them, the boys made off with more animation than either expected to feel again. What a relief it was to move without the entangling impedimenta of those uncontrollable rods! Before they had gone fifty yards they had almost recovered their normal spirits. The barking continued as the boys advanced.

"He's got somethin' or he wouldn't keep it up that way." Bobby turned from the stream, striking off diagonally across the valley. "He's over there—somewhere along the hill."

They followed the increasing volume of sound through a patch of woods and across a rock-strewn plateau to the base of a broken ledge. The sound was very close now, but the dog was hidden behind a barrier of logs and tumbled stones in a tangle of briers.

"Might be a fox-den under that old ledge." Theodore was running forward with nothing in face or movement to indicate the recent headache. And then they saw Prince's plumed tail waving frantically as he dug, his body buried under the dry tangle of a fallen tree-top.

With shouts of encouragement, Bobby and Theodore tore in, breaking away the dead branches to pull apart a small stone pile. Under the spur of this competent assistance, Prince redoubled his efforts.

"Gee! He must be after something' fierce—all the fuss he's makin'," panted Bobby.

"He couldn't make any more noise if 'twas a bear," admitted Theodore, hurling stones right and left as he bored into the heart of the pile.

Then, with a yell, Theodore dove forward, just as Prince, too, lunging wildly, catapulted into him. Rolled over by the impact of the dog, Theodore lay huddled protectingly over something grasped in his hands. Prince charged him again as he lay, but failing to budge him, fell to digging feverishly at his side.

"Grab him, Bobby! Catch hold the darn sea-lion!" sputtered Theodore.

As Bobby dragged the struggling dog away, Theodore, carefully holding some object in his hands, scrambled to his feet.

"Got a live baby woodchuck!" he announced proudly.

"Gee! That's great!" Bobby was striving to stroke the soft fur of the little animal, hardly larger than a baseball, and at the same time fend off Prince with his foot.

"Golly! That old dog's some hunter!" exclaimed Theodore, a new note of admiration in his voice, as the boys fondled the woodchuck, after having, with considerable difficulty, convinced Prince that the hunting of this particular animal was over.

"We'll train him special to hunt woodchucks—it's jest the season for 'em!" cried Bobby, suddenly aflame.

"You bet yeh, and we'll go next Sat'day and catch a whole passel of young ones," supplemented Theodore.

"I'll bet you we can sell 'em." Bobby's eyes were shining. "Every kid wants a woodchuck."

"Sure we can!" Theodore endorsed the suggestion with fervor. "Maybe we can make 'nuff money to buy a canoe."

"I bet you we can!" Bobby's voice rang with the undoubting conviction of a neophyte.

BACK again at the place where they had abandoned the new fishing-tackle, the baby woodchuck was carefully deposited in Theodore's empty creel, and the boys gathered up their fly-fishing outfits.

"What do you think of castin'-rods, Bob?" Theodore asked suddenly. Bobby hesitated.

"Guess they'd be all right fishin' out of a boat on a lake."

"Maybe so," said Theodore doubtfully. "But the old fish-pole's good enough for me."

"Me, too," admitted Bobby, and then, with new animation under the sudden, happy thought, "We can use these creels to carry our lunch and bring back the woodchucks in."

"They'll be bully for that," Theodore agreed.

The rim of the sun was slipping down behind Cemetery Hill as the boys turned into Main Street at the close of their first day's fishing with casting-rods.

"Gee! I wish next Sat'day would hurry and come!" cried Bobby.

Theodore nodded, and again they plodded along in silence, their minds full of wonderful new plans for the next Saturday, while in the bright new creels swinging from their shoulders reposed the day's catch—in one, a dried and withered baby trout, the victim of an accident; in the other, a frightened baby woodchuck, the victim of that predetermined and inevitable necessity men term "fate."

But fate had pressed no disconcerting finger upon Bobby and Theodore. With the elastic readjustment that is the essence of youth, they had reached through disillusionment to a new and greater interest.

"Gee! Catchin' woodchucks is goin' to be the best fun yet, Theodore," said Bobby, as they parted at Theodore's gate.

"Yeh bet yeh!" called back Theodore, hurrying in to exhibit this last, most wonderful catch.

The next story of the "Little Journeys Back Home" series, "Gee! 'Tain't Easy," will appear in January EVERYBODY'S—out December 15th.

Landy *the* Little

Even the Clean, Stimulating Forests Do Not Make a Big Man of a Little One. There the Fittest Survive, as the Author Shows in This Stirring Bit of Life in the Wilds

By Edison Marshall

Author of "The Heart of Little Shikara"—winner of an O. Henry first prize

LANDY GIBBS lived in the deep forest, the last place on earth he should have lived. It takes big men to see over the pine-tops to the white wonder of the wilderness stars; but Landy was very little. This smallness was in his nature, which even in these raw wilds is a much more tragic thing than smallness of stature—a petulance, a delight in petty cruelty, a giving-way to frenzied rage that had before now led him into serious crime, all in a land where all things brood in sorrow but are never petulant, where cruelty, though omnipresent, is never petty, but rather an unimpassioned instrument of the vast, slow-moving aims of nature, and where the trees themselves, even in the rage of the storm, are the name of imperturbability and calm. Because this smallness was in his thoughts, and in a place behind his thoughts that was his soul, he was largely blind. He did not see the march of the tree army down one hill and up another until the clearest of human thought turns back within itself; and he missed the deathless beauty that bigger men not only see but smell and hear and feel.

The twilight dimmed him, one summer day, as he waited in a small covert of brush on a hillside above a tiny, thin pearl necklace of a mountain stream. The whole picture, except for him, was perfect beyond reach of thought. Back of him, the tree army did its ineffable grand march to music which mortals cannot hear, but which must be played in the region of the far stars. A chain of white peaks looked from afar, misty and incredible now that twilight was advancing; and the shadows, growing, softened all hard lines and blended one thing with another. The stream at the base of the hill was only a trickle of water at this season, but it lay in limpid pools with the clear darkness of a girl's dark eyes; it gleamed under high granite stones; it crept like a moonbeam under dusky, fern-grown banks; and now and then, gurgling, it tumbled through rocky clefts in miniature cascades. But, still, one kept seeing Landy Gibbs waiting in his covert.

Landy had a rugged, wrestler's build—deep, thick chest, heavy thighs; his arms were long, and to keep them in proportion, his thick, strong, queerly speckled hands were short and blunt. A hard trigger-pull was no bother to that stubby, powerful index-finger with its broken dull-red nail. He had a round bullet-head, rather wide-awake blue eyes, undistinguished features, and a blond skin that had the same speckled appearance as his hands. The short, bristly hair on his head was the nameless hue of wet straw.

He had no particular interest in the bewitching scene about him. Yet he was standing very watchful, very attentive. His eyes were upon what seemed to be a patch of mud that was half hidden in low ferns thirty yards down the stream.

This was the day's work to Landy. The

patch of mud was a deer-lick—a place where the wild things came for certain natural salts in formation in the rocks. Landy, after certain years of varied kinds of lawlessness, had taken to the pleasant occupation of poaching deer for their hides. He was a hide-hunter only, and his usual kill was around three deer a day.

He had heard the soft twitch and crack of a deer's step in the brush; and it was only a matter of time until the animal would come in to the lick to be viewed along Landy's sights. There was little to warn her of his presence. He had posted himself so that his smell was blown away. The eyes of the wild creatures cannot ordinarily interpret motionless forms; and Landy stood like a block of wood.

The hushed, furtive step drew nearer. A brown shadow flickered, fading again in the further shadows, and soon Landy caught a glimpse of a graceful lifted head. He glanced once at the breech of his rifle, and his hand stiffened where it held the forearm. And now, wholly unsuspecting, the doe was advancing straight into his ambush.

Landy held his fire. He was waiting to make sure, so that an extra cartridge—high-priced since the war in which Landy was not a participant—could be saved. And this small delay had extremely important consequences.

Just as the deer stepped into the lick, just as Landy was drawing his rifle to his shoulder, there occurred the most astonishing interruption. Landy had not watched the lick alone. A competitor of his in deer-slaying, as relentless a hunter as he himself, had made an ambush of the brush covert just beside the lick. Partly because his breed was one that steals like afternoon shadows, partly because the man's gaze had been elsewhere, he had made the stalk to the lick unseen.

Landy had defeated his own ends when he had concealed himself so carefully. Otherwise, being one-tenth frenzied courage and nine-tenths coward, the second hunter would have discerned his presence and put several miles of mountain fastness between them. As it was, he waited breathless till the prey was just beside him; and then he pounced.

There was no withstanding that terrific leap. Cruel claws stretched; ivory fangs made a white streak as they caught the pale light, and the deer went swiftly to the earth. And Landy saw, with a yell of rage, that the flailing hind paws were ripping the deer's precious pelt to ribbons.

Once glance at the round head, the tawny coat, the graceful feline form determined this rival's breed. The indescribable snarl of savagery and blood-lust that the creature uttered as he struck would have identified him just as surely in the darkness. The fiendish kill-cry of the great cats was noted through a thousand square miles of unbroken forest. And it served not only as a relief-valve for the wild brute passions in the killer's heart but also, for a fraction of a second, destroyed the fine edge of Landy's nerve.

He shot; but he did not take quite long enough to make out his target through the sights The ball sped like a hot iron along his rival's scalp, taking off a narrow strip of fur and skin, and the creature's snarl changed to a yell of pain and fear. Before Landy could fire again, he had gone.

He left his prey to Landy, but the man did not want it now. The precious pelt was not worth skinning. And he also left the knowledge that here was the beginning of a long rivalry, one that could never end as long as they hunted the same district—a bitter war between these two remorseless deer-slayers, Landy the hide-hunter, and tawny Pounce, the largest, strongest, most glorious of all the cougars that ranged the lake country.

THE wound on Pounce's scalp had no more serious effect than to give him, at times, a racking headache, to increase his natural caution and to fill him with a deathless hatred for all mankind. He had no other real natural enemies. One glance at his lithe form, the muscles that rippled like water under his tawny skin, and one could understand why even the bull elk turned in terror at the cougar-smell on the wind.

Pounce measured almost nine feet from the tip of his long, ropelike tail to the end of his whiskers. His coat was largely a rich, tawny hue—not spotted, like his first cousins of the Old World—white on the inside of the legs and under the belly. He had a round head, powerful flanks, and his body had the length that marks all particularly agile creatures. At present, now that he was full-fed, his countenance was rather pleasant. He wore a tom-cat smile, and he purred gently as he prepared for his morning slumber. At present, his jaws were closed; otherwise, a spectator might have got an entirely different idea of Pounce's character and disposition. In that mouth there was arranged, by an inscrutable nature, as efficient a set of deadly weapons as one would care to feel. In front were great dog-teeth—sharp fangs that could break an ordinary human vertebra at one closing. But, of course, ordinarily, human vertebræ were not in Pounce's line. Any back-bone that was erect, instead of horizontal, filled his wicked heart with terror.

At present, his paws looked very soft and harmless, seemingly not to be taken seriously by any deer with antlers. No horned buck, however, ever made such a deadly mistake. Each of those paws had a most ingenuous mechanical contrivance, and at the least excitement it changed into a wicked, scrapping, flaying weapon such as no human inventor has ever improved upon. Long, hooked claws extended, each as sharp as needle-points. In the full stroke, they could easily rip away the barrier of flesh and bone that protects the heart.

It can readily be understood that old Ashur, the black bear, ordinarily a fish-eater and honey-grubber, but a slashing, smashing, chain-lightning fighter when he put his claws to it, had no wish deliberately to seek a fight with Pounce. But never let it be thought that he would turn tail in a crisis. Ashur was a discreet bear, afraid of his life of human beings, and with such a great bump of humor that he entirely missed the insufferable conceit that marks practically all of the larger beasts; but he was not a coward. Besides, he had a quick sideways slap that is just another name for death. Ashur avoided Pounce; but way down in the great cat's cunning, wicked soul, he had a most wholesome fear of Ashur.

Even the gray wolves, the very carnate symbols of the wild and all that it means, kept carefully from Pounce's trail. Such creatures as the coyote, a poor relation of the wolves who made the whole forest miserable with his forlorn wails in the twilight, and the lynx, a small edition of Pounce, with extra large and decorative hair tufts at his ears, and the almost vanished wolverene, who knows many things but never has learned yet when to stop fighting, had all about as much chance with Pounce as a magpie with a marten.

THE nights were beloved by Pounce past any speaking. Particularly the moonlit nights, when the strange argent beams probed through every rift in the tall, dusky pines. These were the nights when he knew that the deer were feeding on the hills. On such nights he could move unseen from covert to covert, from shadow to shadow, and the ear o a wolf could not hear him come.

On such nights Pounce's blood seemed to turn to liquid fire in his viens. This was the very glory of hunting—the first glimpse of a buck, feeding quietly on the hillside—Pounce's nose was not particularly keen, and he usually heard or saw his game before he caught a scent—the breathless stalk, the exquisite wait by the trail, the frightful leap when all his complex nervous system seemed to snap and break from inexpressible excitement—and then the triumph, the gorging, the long, full-fed slumber of contentment. He loved the life that had been ordained for him, this tawny deer-slayer of the southern Oregon lake country. The seasons passed one after another, giving him added weight and length, additional cunning and prowess, and he found his ordained delights in every one—summer, with its warm, pale nights; fall, with the changing leaves that grew so tawny in the frost that he could boldly stand then unseen, and the weird calls of the south-going water-fowl, and spring, when the doe's eyes were lustrous with the deathless mystery of motherhood, the new green, the melting snow-bank. Even the cold fury of the mountain winter had no dread for Pounce. His business was with the deer, and he simply followed them down to the lower levels.

This deer business of his was making itself felt throughout all the great wooded expanse of his range. No cougar can kill three deer a week, fifty-two weeks in the year, and not have a disastrous effect on the fawn crop. Far below in the valleys, wise men were passing laws, ever more stringent laws in an effort to save this noble game for future generations. But for a long time no one thought of Pounce. Meanwhile, this remorseless deer-slayer plied through the forest at will, killing, killing, killing as he went. There was only one great source of interference—and that was not from a source that concerned itself with the perpetuation of the deer-herds. It was from a fellow murderer—a deer-hunter who out-killed him six to one.

Everywhere Pounce hunted he found Landy Gibbs ahead of him in the trail. The man seemed to have an unerring instinct as to what glades and hillsides the deer were using. The great cat was ever finding his fresh spore, hearing his heavy body in the brush, glimpsing him as he waited by the deer-licks. And more than once, just as the long tawny body lowered for the death-leap, the thunder-stick would roar in the brush beside and Pounce would be cheated of his prey.

No wonder pale-green flame played in his eyeballs at every fresh manifestation of his rival's presence, and the truth was that each seemed to be the evil genius of the other. They were always crossing trails. Many and many the time Landy took the trail of a fine, fat buck only to find a half-devoured carcass—and a round print in the earth. Many the time the pungent cougar-scent frightened into panic a little herd, all of which might easily have fallen to Landy's rifle. It was a rare day now that Landy took three hides. He did well to get one on the average—and the price of one hide hardly bought food, much less strong drink. His hatred for Pounce came as near being a religion as any emotion that had ever touched Landy's life.

The thing got home to the man's superstitions. It was as if Pounce were an evil spirit sent to plague him, a were-beast seeking revenge for the wound in his head. There seemed to be no conquering him by trap or poison. Both he passed by, with diabolical cunning; though sometimes he did visit the man's camp and steal his fresh meat. The great cat even avoided him in their winter hunting-grounds in the foothills, when the round print showed plainly in the snow. Perhaps the man could have conquered with dogs—but for very good reasons Landy did not wish to go to the settlements and seek for dogs. Any number of things were wiser than that. Many times Pounce lay beside a trail and saw Landy pass in easy range beside him—but always the nine-tenths coward that dwelt under the tawny skin held him from the leap.

So it came about that these two deer-slayers continued to hunt each other—Pounce dogging the man's trail for hours with never the courage to attack, Landy tracking the cougar for weary miles only to lose him at last in some mountain fastness.

CHATBURN, of the state Game Bureau, who knew the ways of beast and man as well as any state official could hope to know them, felt that there was some curious reason behind the sudden shortage of game in the Upper Umpqua country. With all the machinery of the state behind him, he went forth to find that reason. He talked with a trapper here and a hunter there; he ran down a rumor or two, and he even left his office and visited a member of the state Game Commission in one of the lower settlements of the Umpqua. Certain of the truth at last, he conferred with Anderson, a colleague.

"Of course we've got to get a hunter to go up after that big cat," he said, "and the question is: Who can we get? Jenkins has a steady job hunting coyotes for the stock association; Schultz is with the government as a varmint-trapper, and most of the other birds I know would just fool along, making the job last as long as possible."

"How about Long Tom?" Anderson interrupted. The curious name was accented on the "long," rather than the "Tom." "I happen to know he's out of work——"

"Long Tom?" Chatburn echoed. "He's an Indian."

"Almost a pure-bred, I know. What about him?"

Chatburn paused to consider. It was true that Long Tom was out of work, that he would take the quest gladly, and, unlike many white men, he would hunt conscientiously, as many hours a day as he thought ought to constitute an honest day's work, until the animal was taken. He would not pass up opportunities to kill the pest just to perpetuate his job. Yet he was an Indian, and he hunted according to his own private system—not with dogs, as a white man hunted, but with heathen stealth and animal cunning. He seemed to plan his campaign as if he were a beast himself, going where he thought a beast would likely go; and this was not Chatburn's idea. Still, Long Tom now and then had been extraordinarily successful. He was badly in need of money, Anderson said, and he would try hard to earn it. The only thing that remained was that he was Indian, three-fourths pure, and though he lived mostly as white men lived, one had a haunting feeling that sometime, some way this red blood would assert itself.

"It shall be Long Tom," said Chatburn, who made up his mind quickly. "Send for him, will you?"

In his little cabin on one of the tributaries of Cow Creek, Long Tom got the word that Chatburn desired him, and he would please come and confer at once. Long Tom's thought-processes were very straight and sure, but also most matter of fact. So he waited just long enough to put on his hat. Then he strode down to the settlements.

"I'm going to give you a job, Tom," Chatburn began, when they were together in Anderson's office. "Mr. Anderson says you're out of work."

"Yes; me out of work," Tom replied, nodding seriously. "Need money heap bad."

This was quite true. All Long Tom's white acquaintances—he had no real friends that were white—knew that he was planning early marriage with a girl of the Klamath tribes, and young Indian husbands, as well as every other kind, need money to start on.

The white man nodded, showing that he understood.

"Tom, there's a great shortage of deer up in the Doe Creek hills this year. Do you know what's the matter?"

"Maybe cougar," Tom told him; "maybe hide-hunter."

"I think it's a cougar; but there's a possibility that a skin-hunter is working up there." He paused. "Of course, Landy Gibbs has never come out where he went in—but we've all supposed he went through to the Coast Range and is a thousand miles away by now. Tom, the truth is that the cougars are just about wiping out the deer. There's one particular big brute. His track has been seen a dozen times by hunters, and one chap who got a glimpse of him says he's got a white scar clear across the scalp. This big cat seemed to have a beat right about the Doe Creek hills—the best hunting-ground in these immediate parts. Since he's so big, there's a possibility at least that he's kept any smaller cats out of the district—that he ranges it all by himself. He's a destructive cuss—and dozens of hunters went out last fall, after making expensive trips from Seattle and Portland and San Francisco—and never got to see a deer, just because this big devil is keeping them so well cleared out. Tom, I want you to go and get him. We'll pay you fifteen dollars a week to stay on the job and hunt him, and, of course, other varmints that you run across. Also, an extra bonus of fifty dollars—my own sportsmen's club will contribute it if the state won't back me up—will be paid you when you get this big devil——"

"Start to-morrow?" Tom interrupted, quietly.

Chatburn eyed him.

'Sure! And, by the way, Tom, about this bird, Landy Gibbs. He vanished in that country once, as you know. You might keep your eye out for him. I'll not pay fifty dollars—but five hundred for his red scalp."

Long Tom's face was wholly impassive.

"Maybe get him, too."

"I have no reason to think he's up there, but you might keep your eyes open just the same. You remember him, of course—and you remember that ornery shooting-scrape he was in at Riddle. There's five hundred reward for the man who arrests him or who brings proof of his death. So good-by, Tom. Good luck!"

When he was gone, Chatburn and Anderson reflected together.

"The only trouble I've ever had with Indians," Anderson said, "is that they take you altogether too literally."

"You needn't worry in this case," Chatburn replied. "I made myself entirely plain, said just what I meant to say, and am willing to be taken at my word."

LONG TOM found, after weeks of most fatiguing work, that he was dealing with no ordinary cougar. Pounce avoided his traps and deadfalls as completely and as scornfully as those of Landy Gibbs. Long Tom also learned, past doubt, that some white man who chose to avoid him was spending his spare time hunting this same cougar. He knew he was white by certain characteristics of his footprints and the camps that he made in the forests; and he knew that he chose to avoid him by the fact that he found his fresh tracks, one morning, within a few yards of his own camp. There was nothing to say for sure, however, that the man was Landy Gibbs. As yet, Tom had had no glimpse of the man's form in the thickets.

He got a fairly good idea soon of what was happening to the deer. The disastrous shortage could not be attributed to Pounce alone. One day, Tom encountered a set of broken and weather-stained racks where no less than a hundred skins had been cured in one summer.

THEY made a queer trio—the cat, the white man and the Indian. All three were really hunting one another. Sometimes when the moon was up and his glory upon him, Pounce trailed one or the other of the two men; but his great cowardice always commanded him in the end and kept him from success. Tom hunted both the cougar and the white man steadily and determinedly, because this was the deal he had made with Chatburn. Landy hunted Pounce because he hated him, because his depredations were spoiling his own profits, and he hunted Long Tom in self-defense. And it was not through any qualm of pity that he held his fire one breathless twilight when he saw the Indian's form along his sights. The cause was not greatly different than that which checked the puma's spring—because in his wicked heart he was afraid. He had met the law once before, and he had no wish to encounter it again.

Tom set cunning traps, and he laid out poison, and he watched with the patience of a cat itself the deer-licks and drinking-pools; but never a great cougar with a scarred scalp came to his ambush. It was true that he earned his pay. He caught many lynx, and once or twice he found lesser cougars, desperate and ready to fight in his traps. And before the summer was done, Long Tom came to the simple conclusion that he had failed—that both the great cat and the human deer-slayer were too much for him. It would be only the blindest chance, he thought, that could throw either one of them into his path.

When, finally, a chance did come, one late afternoon in August, he let it slip out of his grasp. For the past few weeks he had been making his base-camp in a log cabin at the end of the wagon-road—a strongly built hut that had once been the property of a miner or trapper—and once on his way home to its sheltering walls he forgot his quest. It had been an arduous day, and he forgot to stalk; thus his step was heavy on the dry earth. His rifle lay carelessly in his arms. For a single moment he was not earning the wage that Chatburn promised.

There was a sudden rush—simply a streak of light that sprang from the yawning doorway of the cabin into the shelter of the thickets just in front. The rifle leaped in Tom's arms, gleaming steel itself, but there was no time for the keen black eyes to lower to the sights. Only the rustling of brush showed where the prey had gone.

There could be no doubt of the creature's identity. The length of the streak, the size of the track in the mud named him plain enough. Besides, who but Pounce himself was bold enough to come to a man's cabin in broad daylight, enter the door and help himself to a carcass of venison hanging just within the portals? Evidently his own heavy step on the trail had alarmed the beast almost the moment of its arrival; for as yet it had done nothing more than pull the meat down from the hook.

And as Tom stood staring, his despair passed away, and something that was very near to inspiration flamed in the recesses of his mind. He suddenly felt sure that Pounce would com again, when his own hated presence was far distant, to finish the feast.

How the Indian arrived at this conclusion he could not tell. Wise cougars ordinarily avoid the cabins of men, particularly when they have once been frightened away. By the rules of the woods, Pounce would not come again. But rules are made to be broken, and the law of the forest and the natures of wild beasts has not yet been wholly written down. Long Tom had sudden knowledge, given him, perhaps, because he was a born woods-creature, too, that before another sun had set Pounce would return.

His thought flew at once to steel traps. But Tom had shuffled off for the time being his usual habits of thinking, letting an inner knowledge that was really nothing more or less than instinct reign in their stead; and he knew that traps would not do.

Pounce knew the cold steel of old, and was not likely to put his foot in leaping-range of the cruel jaws. To lay in ambush was no better—because Pounce would come at night.

BUT now he was visited by a bold idea—one that he had never heard of in the talk of experienced trappers. He went first to the door of the cabin, swinging it open and shut. He saw that, although it was strongly and heavily made, it moved easily on its hinges and that it possessed a good latch.

Then he examined the heavy walls of the hut, and particularly the single small window at one side. The window faced a steep slope just beside the cabin—the worst possible place to give light. It was also covered deep with dust and cobwebs, and when the heavy front door swung closed, the cabin lay in half-darkness. This point, however, did not concern him. He was anxious only as to the size of the window and the strength of its frame. The pane was hardly more than a foot square, and the casing was reenforced by the heavy logs of the wall itself.

Assured of all these things, he went speedily to work. The door opened inwardly, after the manner of most cabin doors in snow-country, and with a rope and heavy stone he weighted it so that it would slam shut as soon as the hand was removed from the knob, after the manner of an ordinary weighted gate. Then he laid the venison on the table in the inside of the cabin, attaching a cord to it, which he led down to the floor, through a staple and up to the knob of the door, tying the door wide open. The pull of the weighted door was not strong enough to draw the heavy carcass from the table, but as soon as the deer was dragged down to the floor, the cord would slack sufficiently to let the door swing shut.

It was the simplest kind of device. But Tom knew that by simplicity alone could he outwit the great cougar that he had been sent to slay.

This work done, Tom took a pack of supplies—blankets and food—and removed his unwanted presence. The shadows were already deepening in the thickets. It was almost Pounce's time of glory—the beginning of his hunting.

The truth was that Tom had guessed just right as to the mental processes of the great cat. Pounce slept off his fear in the coverts and wakened desperately hungry. Five days had passed since he had last taken deer. The shortage of game that so irritated his rival slayer, Landy, and which was a topic of wonder at sportsmen's clubs in the valleys, was beginning to oppress him, too. Many a time of late Pounce had watched all night by the licks, and not even a fawn had come to break his fast. He remembered with surging eagerness the fat carcass he had sniffed at that afternoon.

The memory strengthened as one hour after another found him unfed. And when the moon was up and its glory upon him, he turned softly down toward the cabin.

The moon, rolling through the clouds and its white beams flicking through the tree-limbs, made no less sound than he. He slipped from shadow to shadow like a serpent, and the twin moons of his eyes were terrible to see. He paused, watching and alert, at the edge of the thickets.

He crept slowly round the cabin, pausing at the least little sound of a chipmunk in the weeds. But he was reassured at last. None of his foes was here. The venison lay waiting for his pleasure.

He crept softly toward the door. Only the darkness lay within. Again he waited, and again he moved forward. In an instant more he stood at the threshold.

His enemy had been here, but he had gone away. There was no feeling of cold steel waiting in his path. And now his flaming eyes made out the outline of the venison but a few feet further in the almost impenetrable darkness of the room.

He moved toward it, sniffing. Not even a pack-rat scratched in the walls. His white fangs closed, and he wrenched sharply. The carcass rolled from the table on the floor.

Pounce was expecting the sound of the falling venison. The thing he did not expect, and which almost killed him with terror, was the slam of the door swinging shut behind him. The moonlight had been streaming through the doorway, but it winked out as the door closed, and left only an imponderable darkness that pressed upon him like death. Even his cat's eyes were blinded.

Instincts born of terror siezed him, and he made one reckless spring toward the only source of light that remained—the little pale square of the window. So dark it was—hardly differentiated from the black walls—it was a wonder that even these knife-edge senses had discerned it; yet there was no measuring the speed of that flash of instinct, and the thud of the falling vension, the slam of the closing door and the smashing crash of his body against the pane of glass came so swiftly upon each other that they seemed as one great sound. But though Pounce leaped as he had never leaped before, with all the smashing strength of his two hundred pounds of bone and tried muscles, the strong window-casing held, and he dropped, half stunned, to the floor.

He did not waste his strength in leaping again. His infallible instincts told him it would be of no use. Instead, he played the cat's game—drawing back into a corner to wait his fate. Every nerve was keyed to the highest pitch; every muscle was set.

LANDY GIBBS took considerable interest in the fact that Long Tom was not sleeping at home to-night. He caught the gleam of his camp-fire across a half mile of cañon, and, as might one of the wild things that he hunted, he started to make investigations. Even such as see in the dark—wolf and lynx and owl—did not make out his furtive form as he stole up softly to the flickering edge of the Indian's firelight. He knew how to stalk, and the faint sounds that Tom's keen ears might have heard in that profound stillness were easily attributed to such little scurrying folk—gopher and chipmunks and their fellows—as might be curious as to the nature of his blaze. Gibbs stood at last not fifty feet distant in the shadows, his presence absolutely unguessed, and watched the Indian cook supper.

The latter made a perfect target; and Gibbs' hands fumbled hungrily at his rifle. Many times, the last few months, he had fought this same temptation. One little lifting of the weapon, softly, so that the brush might not betray him with its crack and rustle, one glance along the sights, a little half-ounce of pressure at the trigger, and Tom's next report would be made to the buzzards that gather from the sky. Nor was it mercy that restrained Landy's trigger-finger. It was simply fear—that of the law, from which he was now a fugitive.

He decided at once that Tom was hunting—perhaps the cougar, possibly on Landy's own trail. He carried outfit for a two nights' camp.

The smell of frying bacon was enticing. Indeed, the man's pack seemed crammed with "store" food—flour and coffee and sugar and such supplies as he likely kept in great abundance at his main supply-cabin, farther up-stream. And Long Tom did not sleep at home to-night. The greater share of his stores, his rifle-cartridges, unset traps and all the equipment that made life possible in the wilds were left unguarded!

Landy Gibbs did not require any great length of time to decide on his course. It was really the opportunity of a lifetime. Those stores meant independence—supplies with which he could flee far back into the unsurveyed where even the arm of the law could not reach. He could leave Tom lying in his ashes then, and not be afraid of pursuit. He could leave him thus now if he knew for certain the real extent of the stores. Shivering with hatred, he turned back to his own camp.

He was never without his gun; now he procured in addition his ax, a gunny-sack or two and an old-fashioned dark lantern, burning a candle that he used for camp-light. Then, striding swiftly, he followed up the stream and soon made out the cabin, ghostly in the moonlight, on the hillside. No lamp burned in its windows; there was no further need for caution. Likely the door was not locked. If it was, he would break it with his ax.

He walked boldly to the door. Tom had attached a crude device to make it stay closed; but there was no lock as far as Gibbs could see. There was no need whatever for stealth. Except for Tom himself, he was the only human being in a thousand square miles of forest. He tried the knob.

The door opened easily, he thought. He stepped into the gloom, only slightly startled when the door slammed loudly shut behind him. The deep quality of the darkness, however, was somewhat oppressive. Likely the place was filthy with pack-rats; he thought he heard a faint rustle. He fumbled with his dark lantern.

His fingers did not at once encounter the catch that slipped back the protecting steel. He was not, however, greatly distressed; nor was he alarmed by the fact that, in working with the light, he had become bewildered as to the exact location of the door. Suddenly he found the catch, slid back the steel shade, and the wan light streamed out.

He turned it slowly in his hand, seeking the door. He was entirely calm now. It was wonderful how even such a dim light steadied the nerves. The feeble rays swept round the little room. The place was teeming with stores, and all that remained was to take them and go. There was, however, one thing else that remained. The rays suddenly found an answering light—two curious pale-blue circles glowing in a corner.

Just an instant's further glance, in the midst of a scream, showed Landy the truth. The truth was that the wilderness vengeance, infinitely patient, had tracked him down and seized him at last.

Landy decided not to wait to get supplies. The light showed the long tawny body of Pounce, the great cougar—desperate with rage and terror, poised and ready to spring. The man groped for the door, and he actually succeeded in opening it half-way. Then something that was like a resistless storm beat down upon him.

The little woods-creatures that had seen him go in waited a long time for him to reappear again. They heard the sound of a great battle, a fight to the death in which an old feud was being settled for good and all. Man was given in the beginning a fighter's build—as perfect a construction for physical activity as nature ever hit upon—and it can be said for Landy that he made the most of it. He was tough as forged iron, and, besides, he managed to whip his knife from his belt as he went down. The cougar found need for all his mighty strength before this hated prey would lie still. Indeed, it was as good hunting as these two killers could ask for—and the best of it was they could hurt no one but each other.

They fought a great fight in the close darkness, claws and fangs, wrenching muscles and surging shoulders, and the cruel knife drinking blood. It was true that some of Long Tom's best furniture was broken to kindling and his device for closing the door irremediably ruined. There was also the noise of conflict that disturbed the little forest people scurrying on the hill. But even this ceased after a time. There were a few curious rustlings and thrashings, and then the silence came creeping back. Outside, the forest things waited for the victor to reappear.

It didn't make a great deal of difference which if them won, the wild things told each other. The work of killing would go on apace. But it was a curious thing that, after a slowly passing hour, both contestants still lingered in the darkened cabin.

Finally, a gopher, who couldn't see clearly at a distance with his half-blind eyes, crept near and peeped in the moonlit doorway. Then he scampered swiftly back to his people with the word that Pounce and Landy had indeed made truce. But it was the kind of peace-pact that delighted every living creature far and wide through a thousand square miles of forest.

They lay snugly, side by side, sleeping peacefully and without dreams. Both were killers, tried and true, and it had been a most successful evening for both of them.

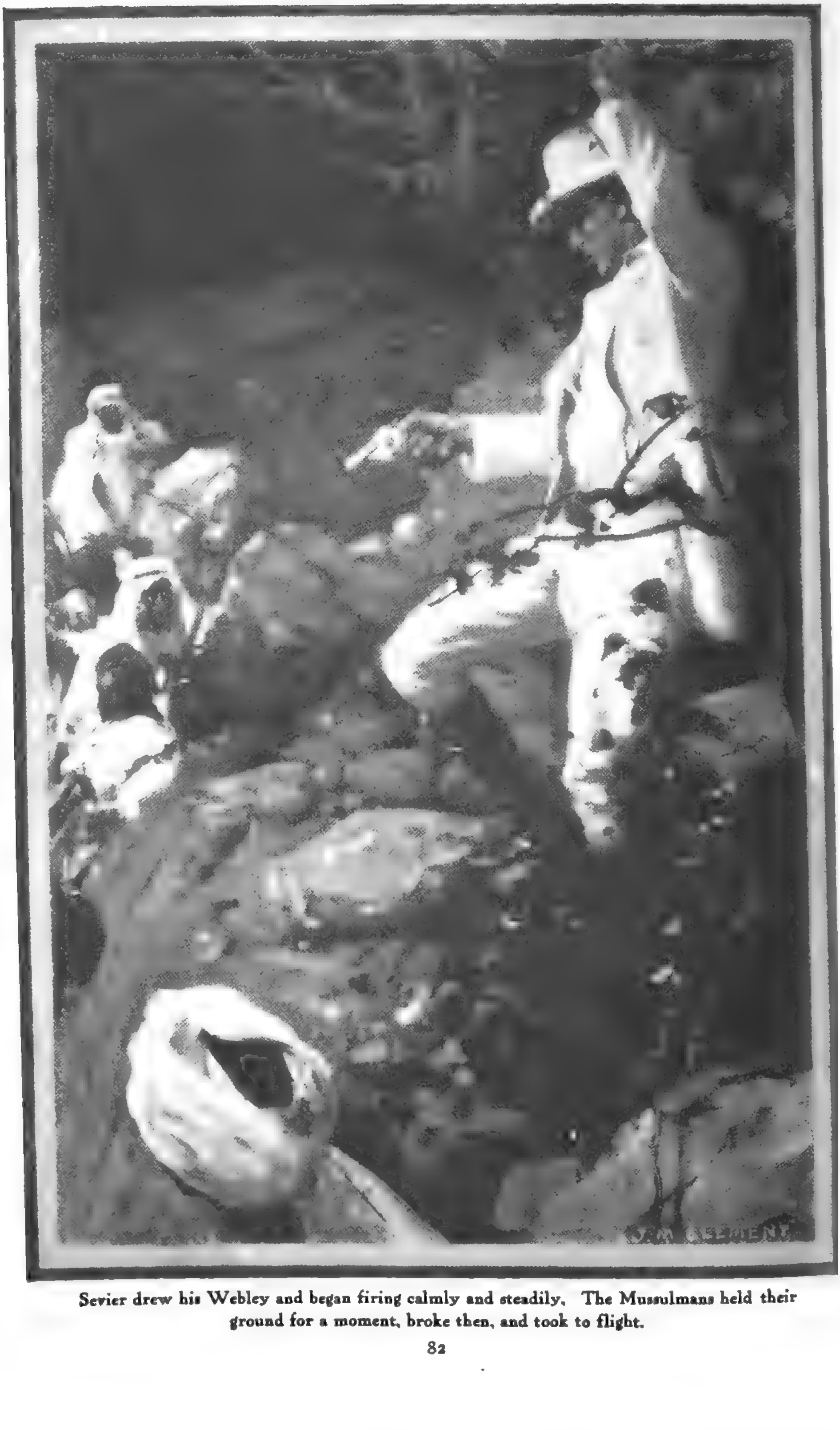
IN HIS office in the settlements, Chatburn of the state Game Department received a most interesting little package. There was no letter with it, only a name scrawled above the address on the outside, but Chatburn understood at once that here was a claim for bounty. One of his hunters in the hills was sending proofs of certain deaths—indeed, certain violent deaths, deeply deplored, that had come to pass in the far upper waters of the Umpqua.

The package contained two rather curious objects. One was a little piece of furry skin that had evidently been taken from the skull of a large cougar, and the most interesting thing about it was that it contained a long white scar of an old wound. The other puzzled Chatburn for a moment —until he recalled his last conversation with his colleague, Anderson.

"The trouble with Indians," Anderson had said, "is that they take you altogether too literally."

This conversation with Anderson and subsequent remarks to Long Tom explained very easily the other object in the package. Chatburn rubbed his chin, grinning, and uttered some mild exclamation as to the ways of Indians. The second object was also a round piece of skin, incontrovertible proof of a death greatly desired by the commonwealth. It was carefully dried, and the hair that grew upon it was about the color of wet straw.

Everybody's Magazine, December, 1922



Sevier drew his Webley and began firing calmly and steadily. The Mussulmans held their ground for a moment, broke then, and took to flight.

If You Enjoy Adventure, You'll Find It Here

The Witch *of* Gondar

Sevier, Arriving in Harrar, Finds Himself a Much Needed Man and Plans to Locate the Apostate Prince and Curb the Witch of Gondar

By William Ashley Anderson

Illustrations by J. M. Clement

Begin this serial with any instalment. The story is here up to this issue

SEVIER, less surprised than either of his Abyssinian companions by the attack that had burst so suddenly upon them, pulled his horse up on its haunches at the first alarm, turned and rode away, as if in full flight. He was clear in a moment, and forced his horse up the bank beside the road until he overlooked the fight. Once where he had planned to be, he dismounted, drew his Webley and began firing calmly and steadily.

He could see that Georgios had gone down in the first rush—the poor devil was probably dead. Gebra, still mounted, was fighting furiously; his figure stood out, luckily. And so Sevier could punish the Mussulmans as he pleased.

His fire was deadly and accurate; it must have made them afraid of reenforcements. They held their ground for a moment, broke then, and took to flight. And Sevier, riding up to Gebra, found him weeping over the body of his friend. Sevier stood, scowling.

Plainly he had not overestimated the seriousness of the situation. If Mussulman bands were at work so boldly, it was plain that all southeastern Abyssinia was on the verge of bursting into flame. Lidj Yassou, the apostate successor of Menilek the Great, had been at Harrar when the last news had come to Dire Daoua. Sevier thanked God for the impulse that had made him risk everything to get through to Dire Daoua from Djibouti.

He and Deschanel, the French political director of the railway, had reached Dire Daoua just as the news had come of the deposition of Lidj Yassou by the council of *rases* and the naming of Ras Taffari, the young governor who ruled at Dire Daoua.

That news had meant that the worst menace, that of a united Abyssinian apostasy, had been averted. But it meant civil war, too; the strange woman, the Witch of Gondar, was still with the prince. Big trouble was coming. Sevier, in spite of this attack, must press on to Harrar, find the old eunuch, the Dedjatch Maukara. His influence was enormous; no one knew which side could command it.

So he left Gebra with the body of Georgios, rode on himself with one of the squires, who had now come up. His own duty was paramount. Ostensibly an American trader, he was, in effect, the principal British agent for all this part of Africa. It rested with him to prevent the power of Abyssinia from destroying the precarious security Great Britain had been able to build up for Allied interests in Africa. Already his departure from Aden, practically besieged by Arabs and Somalis, had been justified.

He thought of the mysterious woman he had seen in Djibouti, with her strange resemblance, to, or suggestion of, the treacherous, beautiful Miriam, of Aden; of the Arab hunchback—a spy, that one, he was certain. A curious feeling possessed him—a conviction that the Arab hunchback held the key to the mystery that was baffling him. Well—he should not be so hard to find.

Weary and stiff, with his horse plodding dejectedly under him, and his squire somewhere far to the rear with instructions to proceed to the hotel upon his arrival, he made his way along the rocky lanes of the city of Harrar somewhere between the hours of one and two in the morning.

AS HE entered Harrar, the streets were gloomy and deserted. The sudden transition from the fresh atmosphere of the open country accentuated the fetid, oppressive smells of filthy houses and dirty streets. A strange mixture of aromas—coffee-berries, drying dusty hides, goats, horses, raw meat, rancid garments of filthy cotton, the damp, musty smoke of dying fires smoldering in cavernous cook-rooms or seeping through heavily thatched *tokhuls*, humanity huddled in unclean congestion, the dusty filth of open drains and pits and a thousand other odors of a sleeping African town all assailed his nostrils at once with an unpleasant suggestion of moral and physical uncleanness.

The elevation of spirit that had sustained him earlier in the night had now departed. His weariness added to his depression.

The fact that the person he sought was a eunuch and past middle age added something to his increasing cynicism. Everything about him seemed so dirty, objectless, unworthy of sacrifice, that his purpose for a moment faltered.

Nevertheless, he picked his way slowly about the dark corners, across the empty market-place, until he approached the arch marking the entrance of Maukara's house. The watchman, stretched across the threshold, was sleeping noisily. After a moment's hesitation, Sevier, tying his horse by the entrance, entered and called softly:

"Peace to the house! Peace!"

The watchman scrambled to his feet with a startled oath and shuffled toward him, holding his simitar in one hand cautiously. When he recognized a European, his anxiety diminished and his curiosity increased. Sevier explained that it was urgently necessary to see the Dedjatch Maukara immediately.

It was necessary to speak in Arabic to the watchman, and the old man stubbornly resisted understanding. He was at last prevailed upon, however, to call a second servant to conduct Sevier into the presence of the *dedjatch*.

In the complete darkness, the servant shuffled ahead, lighting his way with a grimy, dirty lantern, which gave out a glow hardly brighter than a flickering candle. All at once he came to a stop, listening intently. Sevier, straining his ears to catch the sound that had attracted the man's attention, became aware of a faint murmur of voices. Suddenly the servant uttered an exclamation of ribald astonishment. With a strange expressio in his swimming eyes, he leered up at Sevier and whispered,

"There is a woman with him."

Sevier, whose nerves had been worn by excitement of the day and night, anxious and weary, said simply,

"Idiot!"

"I know! I know!" protested the old servant, wagging his head. "Nevertheless, I believe him capable of anything."

"Move on! Cough, knock, shout—anything! But let him know that I have come."

The servant stubbornly refused to move.

Sevier, thoroughly exasperated, thrust him aside, and, before he had time to recover and interfere, advanced boldly, though without attracting attention, until he reached the door of Maukara's room.

The door stood open, and a dim light illumined the interior. One glance into the faintly luminous gloom assured the intruder that Maukara's visitor was indeed a woman.

The first words he heard uttered riveted him to the spot. They were spoken with emotionless calm by Maukara; yet they struck him like a blow.

"There is nothing left, then, I suppose, but for me also to become a follower of Islam."

The reply, soft and clear, roused in the listener emotions he could hardly master. The metallic timbre of the musical voice, slurring the Arabic gutturals as though they were the notes of a recitative song, evoked confused yet pleasant memories. He longed to step suddenly into the room and tear off the white Abyssinian coif which concealed from his view even the shape of the woman's head. Her figure was lost in the black folds of her long cloak.

"I tell you," she said, with penetrating insistence, "it is your only hope. The Crescent hangs like a simitar over the necks of all Christians. It waits only a word to wipe out in blood the shame that besmirches Islam. *Deen! Deen! Deen Mohammed!*" A spasm seemed to distort the brown leathery face of Maukara; yet he continued to listen without flinching. "What good is this dry, fruitless existence when the joys of paradise are waiting you? Of what avail will you find this sterile career of yours when the glory of Islam rises once more to dazzle even the brilliance of the sky? A curse on the Nazarenes! May their souls be burned and scattered before the wrath of Allah! *Y'Allah*, you esteem yourself great, Excellency; yet by to-morrow it may be you will mingle with the dust, a speck in the world of creation—inanimate atom mingled with the polluted soil."

"Ah! And Mussulmans are free from this contamination?" said Maukara, with a dry sweetness.

"Nay, nay! Death comes to all. Do not mock me. I tell you life is given us to live. To live! There is no such thing as worthy sacrifice for anything but Allah. We glorify Him by accepting the joys He offers us. If happiness is not sent by Allah, then to what end are we endowed with senses? Why do our mouths water at the sight of delicious foods? Why do we sigh with melancholy delight when soothing music touches our willing ears, or leap with wanton madness at the roar of throbbing tones? Why do our hearts swell, our pulses beat in throat and wrist and temple, the blood turn to flame within us when confronted with loving loveliness? Oh, whence comes the languorous madness of passion?"

"Whence does it come?" asked Maukara enigmatically.

SEVIER, upon whom the impassioned words of the woman had beat like the enervating throb of sensual music until his senses seemed to swim, fascinated by her, instinctively comprehending the beauty of the form that trembled beneath the all-enveloping cloak, put his hand for support against the jamb of the door. Yet he did not move.

Until the attitude of Maukara was made clear, he did not dare venture to intrude. At these emotionless words of the strangely austere eunuch, however, the American recovered himself with a start and directed his attention more intently upon the one he had come to see.

Thin, bony, with a dark, leathery skin drawn tightly over his withered flesh, his small, hard head lifted austerely above the black cloak draped over his long figure, he seemed, as he stood with one hand nervelessly clutching a staff, like the mummied figure of some disentombed Rameses, quivering slightly with reawakening life—life that poured into him in invisible waves from the glorious figure before him, vibrant with health, energy and flaming passion.

The antitheses these two figures presented struck Sevier with a feeling of revulsion. Between them, perfect subjects in black and white, they seemed to present a living study by Doré, some shocking scene from the "Inferno"—one embodying all the delights that flesh may know; the other passionless, apathetic, unresponsive to the normal senses, yet indicating, despite everything, a penetrating, merciless intellect and the self-contained murderous energy of an eagle.

Sevier, familiar with the soft, fleshy, stupid eunuchs of Asia, dull of intellect, faint-spirited, tremulously frightened at a harshly uttered word, found in the creature before him an amazing type. He was no less astounded by the character of the woman. It was impossible to recognize in her any type of Mussulman.

She seemed, rather, to betray characteristics contradicting every single tradition of the harem, where woman is called upon for no effort of intellect save to entertain, where all her energy is directed to work and self-adornment, where hope cherishes only the thought of a neglected old age, and the woman's body is a soulless baggage, valued only for beauty and its capability of motherhood, and from whom, therefore, little better is expectd than unfaithfulness if a safe opportunity should present itself.

THIS woman, on the contrary, seemed the very spirit of liberty and ambition. She appeared to possess ardor whose outlet was intellectual energy and physical activity. She was forceful—vivid—a flame! It seemed evident that some extraordinary spirit moved her. She was a dominating and inspiring leader. She was a whirlwind, lifting and sweeping everything before it.

Nevertheless, she was suddenly checked by the mild and apparently inane query of the *dedjatch*. Rendered almost speechless by the rush of emotions and ideas that she sought to express, the woman first clasped her hands to her bosom, then flung them out in a gesture of impatient ardor.

"Look about! Feel! Pay some attention to what Allah flings before you. Every leaf upon the trees trembles with the sap of life. The bird with its ravishing song sets the very atmosphere quivering with delight; the blue sky invites the expanding soul; the perfumed wind from flowery meadows intoxicates, and the soft moon fills us with a delicious madness. If there is not the ardor of love, there is at least the passion of battle! There is honor, glory, power! You may hear the roar of the multitude—see the bright simitars of the warriors—the great men bowing to your fame! From the mountains of India to the waters of the Atlantic the green flag will fly. You cannot check it!"

"Were these the seductions that won the prince?"

"O Allah, give me patience! If I speak thus, it is not to seduce. You are Maukara. Your power is great; but it will wane unless you come forth from your rocky monastery to the glory we offer. Don't vainly throw your body in the path of the storm. Remember I am El Fetnah. I am The Storm! I bear the thunder, the lightning and the whirlwind, but also I bring the soft rain and the blossoms of the pomegranate."

"Enchantress, how could the boy resist you?"

"Resist? What do you mean? I know him not. I know no man. *You* know that. I have my body, and it is fair; but I have a mind also. By Allah, I know within me I possess a soul, and it rides my body as an Arab rides his horse. But this prince—he has about him the legitimates of his harem; that is all. It is permitted that a man dally with his own wives—soft, little, useless doves!"

Maukara, as though reading through a roster, repeated:

"The daughter of Emir Abdulali, the daughter of Adal, the daughter of Nagadras Mohammed Abu Bekir, the niece of Abba Djifar, and I do not know how many concubines in addition who fill in the moments when loneliness must oppress his yearning soul. Champagne to intoxicate the senses, music to rouse the passions, laughter to bring forgetfulness of honor and wanton beauty to bring damnation!"

"Wah!" exclaimed the woman in a louder tone, with a gesture of exasperation. "Is there life in your veins after all?"

"There is life!"

"Ah! To what purpose?"

"Once," said the *dedjatch*, with calm reflection, "I found it necessary to rebuke this profligate prince——"

"Beware! He *is* the prince."

"Once," insisted the voice, with a sharp rising inflection, "I rebuked him justly. 'Beware!' he said, with surly, stupid rage, in your own words. 'Do not forget I am your monarch.' I answered him then, as I answer you now." At these words, the sharp, withered countenance became quick with animation; the eyes glistened; the thin, ascetic lips drew back from the long teeth. He exclaimed in a clear, high-pitched voice: "There is no harm you can bring to me! The body you prize so much is only a poorly formed vessel made livable by the breath of God. Envelop it in tinsel; but the glory that surrounds it will fade quickly away. Life is a period—one breath or many. It comes to the same in the end—and death puts the crown upon it. But this beauty you show me—what is it? A form of flesh and bone, soft and weak, that cannot survive corruption by more than a few hours—a face which, with all its animation, its dimples, curves, fleeting expressions and engaging flushes, is nothing but a mechanical contrivance to serve our needs—expressions to betray the character, wrinkles of transparent skin through which we peer dimly, a well-shaped chin to chew our food, a mouth designed to gobble it and emit brainless fallacies——"

"Ugh!" muttered the woman, recoiling in disgust. "Blasphemer of Allah! May Allah forgive me! You are, in truth, a devil who knows no good."

"Sorceress!" shrieked the *dedjatch*, raising his staff in the air. "Corrupter of youth! Destroyer of souls! You have reached your end. Death to the infidel!"

Instantly he began to rain blows upon her head and shoulders, driving her into a corner and striking her until she fell to the floor, trying to cover her head with bare white arms, moaning pitifully.

Sevier who had observed every movement, was stunned for a moment. As the eunuch continued, however, mercilessly to belabor the fallen woman, his head suddenly began to spin with madness. The sound of men rushing along the corridor startled him into reckless action.

WITHOUT uttering a sound, he rushed into the room, and, seizing the *dedjatch* in his arms as though to crush him, flung him across the room so that he fell heavily against the table, sending the light crashing to the floor and plunging the room into darkness.

Sevier instantly stooped in the dark, and, touching the woman, lifted her gently in his arms.

Her arms crept uncertainly about his neck; then, reassured, she clung to him with the desperation of a frightened child. Except that she breathed quickly and tremulously with pain and shock, she did not seem to have suffered any great hurt. Sevier, acutely conscious of the tenderness of her form, in an agony of shame at the thoughts of the blows that had beaten her soft body, held her for an instant close to him. A wavering beam of light from the lantern of the approaching servant just then pierced the gloom of the room and lighted up for an instant the pale countenance of the mysterious woman. Her fevered lips parted as she panted for breath. Her eyelids drooping pallidly, with long, glossy lashes lying against a clear, rounded cheek, pure and soft in luster as alabaster.

He started violently; for in that instant he recognized her as the woman who had stood day after day in the shadow of the arch of Abu Khalil's house, watching him!

In a turbulent rush of confused recollection, he also believed he again beheld the beautiful Abyssinian of Djibouti.

"Miriam!" he cried hoarsely.

"Help! Help! The guard!" shrieked the shrill voice of Maukara. "Seize her! The Witch of Gondar!"

The woman's eyes flashed open and looked straight into Sevier's, wide and shadowy with instant recognition and a peculiar horror. The flickering light passed, the deep darkness wiping out the glorious yet tragic mask of her face as though it had on the instant been absorbed in the darkness of eternity. Startled, confused, horrified at the repeated cries of the *dedjatch*, who was feeling about, striking right and left with his staff, Sevier limply relaxed his embrace. At the same instant two soft hands reached up and pressed against his face. He let his hands drop to his sides. He thought he heard a sigh or a sob—then again the voice of the *dedjatch:*

"Seize her! Seize her! The Witch of Gondar! In the name of Menilek, the guard!"

In a few minutes the room was filled with servants and warriors who, roused by the shouts, had wakened and rushed about uncertainly until directed to Maukara's room by the old watchman, who had begun to shuffle forward, shouting, the moment Sevier sprang into the room. To him, it seemed that the American must have leaped forward to the assistance of the *dedjatch;* for he had not moved until after Maukara's first cry of fury. As he entered, therefore, he made no attempt to intercept Sevier, and those who followed him, with the cry: "The Witch of Gondar!" ringing in their ears, for the moment disregarded him also. While Maukara himself, not knowing what force had seized him, confused by the darkness and the silence of the witch, despite his keen intelligence had felt spasms of terror as he spun across the room and plunged into darkness.

He had heard only the word "Miriam!" cried in the hollowness of the chamber in terrible accents. The next instant, it seemed, he was surrounded by his own warriors, among whom was the European.

The Witch of Gondar had completely disappeared.

They could find her nowhere, and the

dedjatch, suddenly apathetic, seemed to lose interest in the search.

By the time the room had been lighted, and soldiers despatched in all directions to seize the woman, Sevier had somewhat recovered his presence of mind. The appalling realization that the woman who had watched him from the shadow of Abu Khalil's window had watched to spy upon him, that her convulsive embrace upon the roof had in truth been a deadly trap, that the eyes that had studied him over the tables of the café in Djibouti had been looking into his mind, and that, in short, the woman about whom he had unconsciously woven romantic and tender thoughts was none other than the Witch of Gondar filled him with a momentary sickening panic.

In a flash he understood that he was known, marked, tracked from place to place; but whether he had been marked for destruction or it had been intended to seduce him, as the attempt had been made to seduce the unshakeable Maukara, he could only guess. It made him almost sick to think how nearly his weakness had betrayed him; and yet, withal, he felt a treacherous hope that the woman would escape from falling into the merciless hands of the *dedjatch*——

Slowly his befogged mind began to clarify. He realized at last that the active impulse, the force that had shoved Lidj Yassou into the current of unrest and was threatening the overthrow of the nation was the Witch of Gondar herself—and that she fought for Islam!

As he thought of this, his rage mounted within him; but the next moment, as he recalled her disarming loveliness, the shadowy moodiness of her eyes suddenly sparkling with hypnotic light, the firm, gracious contours of her lithe body, the tremulous uncertainty of her last embrace, he shuddered. He knew that the recollection brought a weakening sweetness to his soul.

He lifted his frowning gaze and looked into the beady eyes of Maukara. With a supreme effort he found voice to say firmly, before any one could direct a question at him:

"I have just arrived from Ras Taffari. I have a message for Dedjatch Maukara from the throne."

Maukara's figure stiffened perceptibly.

"From the throne? But the prince is here—in Harrar."

"Your Excellency, the message comes from her Highness Zeoditou and the Grand Council of *rases* at Addis Abeba."

"O Gebri! O Christos!" exclaimed the *dedjatch*, striking himself lightly on the chest with his clenched hands as though to still a sudden tumult that had been roused within him. His mind seemed to take fire and convert his vivid thoughts into action. The Witch of Gondar was forgotten.

SEIZING his staff, without a word he drove his retainers from the room, and they gave way before him, wincing like faithful dogs unfrightened at the gentle chastisement of a respected master. Soon he was alone with Sevier.

"Quick!" he exclaimed shrilly. "The message!"

Sevier took the sheets from his pocket and spread them before the *dedjatch*, explaining rapidly as he did so the events of the week at Addis Abeba. When he had done, the *dedjatch* read the message through quickly. At length he raised eyes glittering with a cold, restrained joy.

"Do you realize," he demanded, "what hopes this mad prince had raised within him?"

"I know he threatened to upset the peace of Abyssinia."

"That is nothing. He hoped to conquer the world. The pretensions of the Mahdi were nothing to his. He hoped to extend a sway beyond that of Mohammed himself."

"Is he entirely mad, then?"

"He is not mad at all. It might have been done. I tell you, stranger, that I, Dedjatch Maukara, could have accomplished it. Unshaken by any petty enervating passion, direct, ruthless, far-seeing, I could have conquered the world!" The light that had leaped in his eyes, a light of fanatic madness, flickered and went out like a candle guttered by a rising wind. "To what end?" he cried suddenly. "Child of man, consider the words of the Son of God: 'For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?' There is the answer to ruthless ambition!

"I have ten, perhaps fifteen years to live. Those years I have dedicated to the service of God. I had already sought the seclusion of my monastery when this danger to my country, my faith and my God began to threaten. It is a filthy disease, an infection bred of ambition and sensuality, and driving men to destructive madness. Look at this poor prince, a victim, obeying the lust of all his senses—and yet dreaming to conquer the world!"

"But this danger is real!" protested Sevier vehemently. "With the Witch of Gondar still free, it may break upon us at any moment." The words had leaped involuntarily to his lips; yet he finished the sentence firmly.

"No. The dreams are as ephemeral as the fumes of *bhang*. It would have been better for that prince to have died yesterday."

"Yesterday?"

"He dreamed he was a conqueror—though the weak tool of a woman—and he might have died in that delusion. As for her, poor fool, she, too, dreamed she was a conqueror, thought her illusion had a certain inspiration in it—and she became the hysterical tool of the Senussi."

"Ah!" cried Sevier, as his last doubt was swept away in a flood of light.

"Yes. Have you not considered that the frontier of Gondar borders the Sudan, and that beyond the Sudan, in the heart of the Sahara, is the center of strength of the Senussi, the Mussulman brotherhood which has successfully kept in revolt Tripoli, Morocco, the desert borders of Algiers, the bazaars of Egypt, Kordofan and Somaliland, and hoped with a sulphur match to explode the volcano of Abyssinia? That vain hope is dead. Your arrival, friend of the world, is timely."

"May I ask what you intend to do?"

"My servants will direct you to the hotel," replied the *dedjatch* evasively. "You will find every comfort there. The sky is already beginning to gray with the approach of dawn. Sleep. I do not doubt you need it."

"I am exhausted," said Sevier simply.

"Well, I thank you, but I do not need you. When you wake, perhaps you will see that the spirit of Menilek still lives to conquer evil."

AS SEVIER made his way through the stirring town, the shadows of night were beginning to thin with the gray dissolution of dawn. It seemed less of a sleeping city. He heard at last the call of the muezzin, and the streets began to stir with life. Groans, coughs, long-drawn-out sighs, sneezes, querulous calls, the scraping of charpoys, the chopping of wood, the crackling of kindling on freshly renewed fires indicated that humanity was coming out of slumber into the adventure of another day.

Camels grumbled deep in their throats; frisky donkeys, lifting their tails, brayed lustily, echoed more harmoniously by the lively whinnying of the small, active Abyssinian horses.

The streets began to fill with muffled figures moving in the direction of the mosques. Day at last dawned as Sevier, almost staggering with fatigue of mind and body, entered the hotel.

Undressing himself with the aid of his squire, who had reached the hotel before him and was waiting his arrival, he rolled into bed and immediately fell into a heavy though restless sleep. The servant tidied his clothes, prepared a bath against his awakening, drew the blinds to keep the room in darkness, closed the door so that he would not be disturbed by unnecessary noises and left him wrapped in oblivion.

His slumber, however, was disturbed by dreams in which he seemed vaguely to sense the confused sounds of a tumult.

He woke late in the afternoon, hot, unrefreshed, with dry eyes, a mouth full of cotton and his body soaked in perspiration, His first inclination was to roll over and sleep on. But the silence of the closed room had grown oppressive. He looked blearily at his watch. The lateness of the hour startled him.

Swinging abruptly out of bed, he rang for the servant. After several minutes without response, he rang again and again, until eventually he gave up in disgust. His saddle-bags having been emptied upon his arrival and the contents spread about for his convenience, he had no difficulty, when once he had located the bath, in completing a refreshing toilet. Hunger began then to gnaw at him.

Lighting a cigarette, he went down to the front of the hotel.

Here the excited voices of some Greeks, trembling with eagerness to be heard yet seeming on the point of choking with an unnamed timidity, immediately attracted his attention. There was an air of bravado about their conversation, as though making an effort, by a mutual exchange of high-voiced opinions, to beat down a fear that had almost overwhelmed them. Sevier, sensing danger of some sort, promptly paused to get his bearings and hear something of the conversation. The first words to startle his ears were shouted in French.

"Listen; I tell you there is no one but the British consul who could stop it."

"These English!"

"Nevertheless, in the midst of the slaughter, he went alone to Maukara——"

"And—pouf!—that ended it, I suppose."

"By God, it did!"

"But who was left to slaughter? The bodies lie thrown about in their blood like sheep in a *zareba*, destroyed by a leopard. There is a smell of blood in the ai —blood and dust and smoke and powder. The air seems to ring yet with the yells. I confess to you it turned my stomach. I was sick!"

"Just the same, I don't blame Maukara. It's what they've been asking for."

"Ah! These Abyssinians of Shoa have been aching to butcher the Somalis for months."

"Who blames them?"

"The Somalis started it themselves."

"I deny the Somalis started it. They haven't the courage to attack an Abyssinian of Shoa."

"Oh, as to courage, it wasn't necessary to strike. Isn't an insult a blow?"

"Yes. Certainly. That is an exact fact. Somalis and Galas and Dankalis have been parading the streets like conquerors. Holy God, their insolence must have been unbearable—galloping their horses through the streets, clashing their shields and spears, making *fantasia* before Lidj Yassou! Holy Name! They sneered, jeered, bumped shoulders. They mocked the Christians at every genuflection. They bandied the battle-cries of Islam like direct threats. How long these Aybssinians have stood it!"

"Do you know how it started? A Somali from the Ogaden first struck a man from Shoa."

"They say that's a fact. But, then, I tell you there was the devil to pay. They got my dragoman. Do you remember Hassan Ali—the little fellow who used to skip? Well, I saw him running with his eyes popping, his mouth agape, his skinny hands pulling his *footah* clear up to his waist, so he could run faster. I ran after them yelling: 'Leave him alone! By God, leave him alone, or there'll be trouble!' An Abyssinian caught up to him on his horse. I saw his sword flash. Zip! Good-by, Hassan Ali! I kept on swallowing hard, and I couldn't say a word. That bloody demon just looked at me for a minute, and I couldn't say a word."

"The market-place is covered with blood."

"There'll be no coffee sold for several days."

"My house-boy is an Abyssinian. I saw blood on his clothes—and he'll be getting my supper in an hour."

AS THE syllables of this conversation, broken, disjointed, rose and fell, increased to a chorus of exclamations or died down to the hurried tale of some individual with a striking experience to set forth, it became appallingly clear to Sevier that the tumult that had made his slumber restless was not the stuff of dreams. He needed no further evidence to tell him that the city had, as he slept, become the scene of one of those swift, furious, bloody massacres that have marked the history of Africa with asterisks.

Unconfronted with the actual spectacle of rivulets of blood or corpses crumpled in the drains, choking doorways, or under the useless shelter of mud walls, though he knew clearly that those scenes were just beyond the doorway, he felt no immediate sense of horror as the knowledge became clear to him. It was still simply a tale told in exclamations. He broke into the conversation with a question:

"Where is Dedjatch Maukara?"

The Greeks turned and looked at the stranger with nervous abstraction.

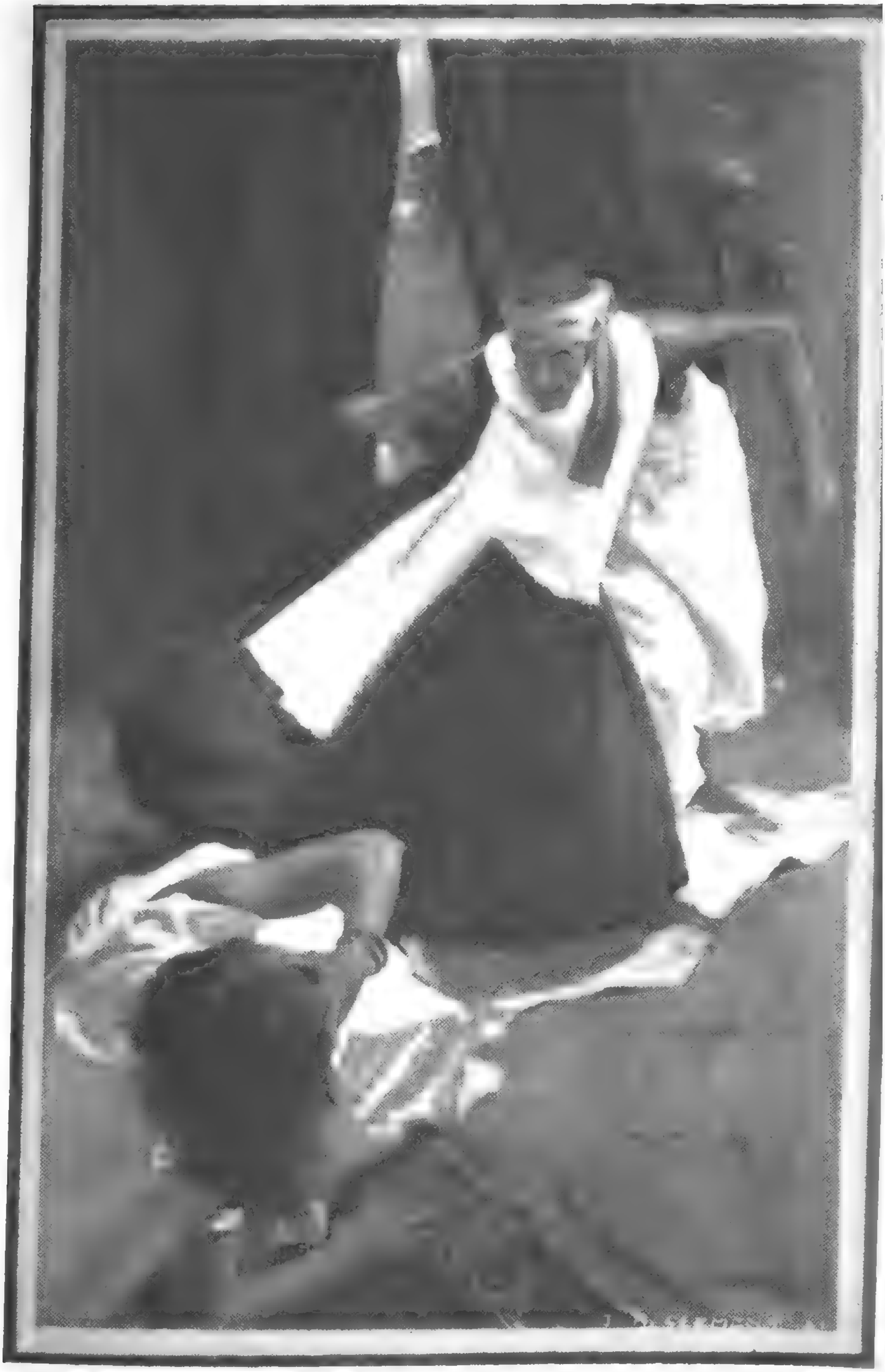
"Dedjatch Maukara?" said one, recovering himself with a start. "Oh, he goes round ambling on his white Muscat mule, gently whacking his warriors, pointing out that the nuisance must be abated."

"And?"

"And, name of God, it is abated! The city's as quiet and dead as a tombstone."

"What has become of Lidj Yassou?"

"Gone! Vanished! He flew with the swiftest of his Somali and Arab friends. He left his harem behind him and bolted for



Instantly he began to rain blows upon her head and shoulders, striking her until she fell to the floor, moaning pitifully the desert. They're all scattered. Oh, he's done for! *Bass!*"

"They've just circulated a notice," another volunteered, "saying he's been deposed. There's an empress. And Ras Taffari is regent——"

"I heard something of that," Sevier interrupted. After a momentary silence he added hesitatingly, "Have any of you heard anything of a woman called the Witch of Gondar?"

No one had.

"She is an Arab," suggested Sevier tentatively.

"In that case," said one, "she's probably hidden among the Arabs. The Abyssinians seem to have attacked only the Somalis."

"Well, if that's so," said Sevier, after another pause, during which he painstakingly lit a cigarette to conceal a strange nervousness that suddenly attacked him and made him tremble slightly, "I think I'll get a bite to eat—I could wolf a sheep—and go back to bed——"

Now that the necessity for the continuous, alert tension of all his faculties had passed, Sevier experienced a dull mental weariness, feeling that sagging sense of ineffectiveness of a man whose comrades have been killed or badly maimed in a battle from which he has come unscathed with no mark to show the risks he ran. All that the world might ever know of the danger that had menaced it, he thought sardonically, would be the rumor of a riot in Harrar.

After a brief cursory inspection of the blood-stained city and a visit to the unflinching British consul, through whom he despatched some necessary reports, he paid a second call on the *dedjatch*, to confirm details of the massacre and of the flight of Lidj Yassou.

Of Lidj Yassou and El Fetnah, the Witch of Gondar, no exact details could be learned. El Fetnah could not be found among the frightened women of the harem abandoned by Lidj Yassou in his precipitate flight, nor could any trace of her be discovered after long and painstaking search.

DESPITE the reports from Addis Abeba that the Empress Zeoditou was securely fixed upon the throne, Sevier felt one of those vague presentiments that men of experience in primitive or barbarous countries are inclined to heed, and refused to feel confident that the danger was crushed until the apostate prince was located and a check put upon El Fetnah. Though he was ready enough to discount the importance of the prince alone, he knew that no man of spirit could be touched by The Storm without being stirred into a whirlwind.

He had seen the flame leaping in the dried flesh of Maukara. He had felt the blood hammer in his own temples. He had seen the crippled Cohusac take on the strength and agility of a leopard to attain the impossible. He knew how fiercely that storm could fan the flame of fanaticism.

All at once it was reported that a small army of Somalis was marching with great rapidity on the city, determined to drench again in blood the place that had cast them out. The all-seeing Maukara had anticipated this contingency. Sufficient Shoan warriors were at hand to meet the advance. A brief, violent battle ensued, in which the Somalis, somewhat shaken by the recent experience of their fellow tribesmen in Harrar, and always at their worst as fighting men when brought face to face with Abyssinians, were smashed and scattered, and Lidj Yassou, with Abu Bekir, his embittered father-in-law, fled to the deserts of Danakil, stripped of all his power.

But El Fetnah again escaped.

Shortly after this engagement, a new force appeared with startling unexpectedness and attempted to cut the railway line between Dire Daoua and Addis Abeba. A pitched battle was fought across the tracks, Ras Taffari's Abyssinians using the embankment as a breastwork, and being completely victorious.

El Fetnah again eluded capture.

After going thoroughly over the reports of both these affairs with the British consul —a calm, level-eyed, perspicacious young man, who studied politics, commerce and big-game hunting from the same angle—Sevier became convinced that El Fetnah continued to be the spirit of the storm, and that there could be no peace until she was either driven from the country or captured.

At the thought of her capture, he felt almost sickened with apprehension. Nevertheless, steeling himself with resolve, he went once more to Maukara.

"I have come to see if you can assist me in locating an Arab hunchback."

"An Arab hunchback! To what end?"

"He traveled in company with the Witch of Gondar from Dire Daoua to Harrar. If we locate him, we may trace El Fetnah."

A spark seemed to strike from Maukara's eye.

"We will locate him, then!"

"Have you," said Sevier, forestalled from any chance of circumlocution, "found any trace of her?"

The shriveled ascetic, staring him almost out of countenance, said tonelessly:

"Your thought is too much of women. May God spare you from their treachery!"

Despite every effort of self-control, Sevier felt a flush of guilty anger creeping over his forehead. The expression on the eunuch's face caused resentment to boil up within him.

"*Dedjatch*," he demanded angrily, "explain your meaning."

"It may mean nothing—perhaps everything," said the *dedjatch*, without change of countenance, adding unexpectedly: "My work here is done. My temporal duty is almost satisfied. I am going to Addis Abeba to pay my respects to the Empress Zeoditou."

Sevier, unable to restrain the impulse, said,

"A woman."

Maukara's emaciated hand darted to his lips. Suddenly his eyes sparkled. A smile flitted over his countenance.

"You are just," he said calmly. "Listen, friend of the Faith; El Fetnah, I believe, has gone into the north. This poor Lidj Yassou is flung aside as a weak and useless tool. We need think of him no longer. But in the town of Dessie there is a man of steel and flame—the Negus Mikael, king of Wollo——"

"But," protested Sevier, overcome with astonishment, "was he not in Addis Abeba recently when the Empress Zeoditou took the throne?"

"Do not trust appearances. Sullen and silent, he slipped out of the city and went northward. He is, remember, the husband of Waizaro Shoa Rogga, the second daughter of Menilek the Great, and the father of the apostate, Lidj Yassou."

"But surely he will not oppose the Faith?"

"The Faith! He renounced Islam to wed the daughter of Menilek. To him, ambition is greater than faith. Brave, ruthless, unbending, proud, he measures success by achievement. His code of honor is modified by the diplomacy of opportunity. Resistance to his ideas suggests insult. An insult demands violent redress. Think! It is his blood and bone we have cast into the gutter. Ha, ha! If he wishes to play the fool, we'll find a sweeper for him."

"And El Fetnah?"

"May she shrivel!" cried the *dedjatch*, and Sevier pursued the subject no further.

THE thought of the hunchback had been an inspiration to Sevier. The more he considered it the more convinced he became that the Arab cripple was an agent of El Fetnah, but whether merely as a local spy, such as the comely Greek at Djibouti had appeared to be, or a figure of such prominence as Abu Khalil, of Aden, he could not determine. The association with Abu Khalil was too distant at the moment to be of much use, but, in recalling him, a disturbing thought came into Sevier's head.

The part played by Cohusac struck him all at once as curious. It had not occurred to him to consider it before in any but the light of romance, but now, regarding it with a better knowledge of its hidden significance, it seemed almost incomprehensible that the crippled French youth would have entered so desperately upon the adventure—only for a kiss.

But if not for romance, then why? There had not been the slightest doubt of the peril in which Sevier had found him and from which he had with difficulty rescued him. The only solution seemed to be that Cohusac had, in fact, madly scaled the wall, and that El Fetnah, upon discovering he had tricked her and was not Sevier, whom she had been led to expect, had, nevertheless, with sharp perception seized the chance of still luring the American into the trap by persuading her weak captive that her only purpose was a romantic interest in his friend and the frantic determination of a love-mad woman to see her lover face to face.

Cohusac would have understood that, and would have been a willing accomplice. He only regretted now that he had not taken a more lively interest in the young Frenchman's babblings of the beautiful woman, for he must have studied her closely.

Contenting himself with this explanation, Sevier then set out to trace the hunchback.

He learned that the troubadour had indeed reached Harrar, probably with the party that had killed Georgios on the ride from Dire Daoua, and, surviving the massacre which had been concentrated principally against the Somalis, had found his way back over the road again to Dire Daoua.

There he had managed to win the favor of a place on a troop train; and thus, traveling alone, earning sufficient bakshish for his food by means of his songs and racy Arabian tales, sleeping where night found him, rarely smiling, melancholy and wistful, he finally reached Addis Abeba. Here the last trace of him was lost.

Sevier jumped to the conclusion that Dedjatch Maukara's fear of danger from the north, where he believed El Fetnah had gone in an attempt to stir up the Negus Mikael to avenge his son, was now well founded. It appeared obvious to him, then, that her Arab agent had gone to rejoin her, following the more frequented road in order to pick up what information he could at Addis Abeba before traveling northward himself. If he acted with great speed, then there was a possibility of intercepting the hunchback in the capital itself.

When he confided again in the eunuch, he, with a distracted air, nodded his head and suggested that Sevier accompany him to Addis Abeba, as he was himself leaving immediately for the capital.

The strangely contrasting pair made their way westward together, acting as though chance had brought about the companionship, though in reality taking furtive and intense interest in the unfolding of each other's character.

Never in all his experience had Sevier encountered so strange a type—one who seemed to embody in an incorruptible frame a keen, uncanny and sensible intelligence that appeared to comprehend every subtle emotion governing human activities, though himself rising superior to them, and the power to rouse in himself every evidence of the most savage and ungovernable passions, though his heart was dry as bone.

He was a true ascetic. His food was limited to simple necessities—onions, unleavened pancakes and occasionally a thin meat stew, flaming, however, with chillies and other hot spices. He sipped *tedj*, the national brew of honey, and an herb called *gesho*, sparingly. Pomp, panoply, show of any sort bored him, though he knew to a nicety the psychological importance of display upon the average man and woman.

He lived daily with the thought in mind that each day might prove his last. His ruthlessness, therefore, was born not of fear or ambition but of an inflexible determination to correct active evils, and, since violence was nature's corrective, he used violence unflinchingly.

When, after a rapid journey by horse, troop train, and hand-car, they came at last to the end of the railway, twenty-five miles from Addis Abeba in the Vale of Shoa, and took horses for their separate destinations, the old *dedjatch* turned rigidly in his saddle and, with a slightly sardonic smile, made a brief adieu to Sevier, concluding enigmatically:

"Behold, then, friend, you enter the land of bursting roses and dripping honey—of comely, languorous women and unexpected violence. St. Joseph guide thee!" Suddenly a gentle ironic humor became manifest in the thin, dark countenance, and he added, "But, in the matter of women, don't scorn the knowledge of Maukara."

SEVIER reached the hotel, converted after the death of Menilek from a royal rest-house into an inn for the reception of Europeans, too late for lunch. He would have gone immediately to Deschenel's, but he learned that the political director had returned to Djibouti; and since the legations were several miles from the center of the town, he decided to remain at the hotel. This had the added advantage of establishing his character as an American trader.

He had been there once before in that capacity, and the proprietor, a rotund and softly-speaking Greek, received him, therefore, as an old customer. He was given a comfortable room; a refreshing meal was spread for him, a hot bath prepared through the combined efforts of five strong men, two pumps and several barrows of eucalyptus wood, and negotiations immediately commenced for the purchase of a suitable horse and saddle.

The Dedjatch Maukara had indicated before they separated that no effort would be neglected to discover and seize the Arab hunchback. Satisfied, therefore, that he could add nothing at the moment to these activities, Sevier, by tea-time, permitted himself to feel thoroughly at home in the hotel and began to enjoy complete relaxation. But even in his moments of idleness he could not forget that El Fetnah, like an inflammable whirlwind, needed only a spark to set the north aflame and bring destruction roaring down upon them.

THE city of Addis Abeba, scattered on its several low hills, and consisting of disjointed groups of villages, with barbarous mud-and-thatch *tokhuls* leaning against pretentious cut-stone buildings; streets and lanes originally paved with stone but now cut and eroded so as to be impassable to almost anything but mules and the agile highland horses; a market-place as bare and unattractive as the scald-head of a negro and filled with every kind of native from haughty *rases*, cantering indifferently through the litter of primitive wares displayed in the dust, to cheese-faced lepers, seated with a little bare space about them, tinkling bells and bleating pitifully—this city, with a population of fifty thousand people, the capital of the ancient empire, had nothing to show of any former greatness.

The only indications of character or permanence that it displayed were the cathedral that rose with dignity above the litter of the dusty streets, the bullets that passed as cash in the market-place and hung with accouterments of war upon every single Shoan capable of bearing arms, and the sprawling corrugated-iron-roofed customhouse, where the octroi was paid in kind, and elephants' tusks, raw rubber, hides, honey, beeswax and drying coffee littered the ground.

The open places were thronged. A pall of dust overhung everything, like the low, dense cloud above marching footmen, with occasional thinner, higher clouds caused by men on horseback. Long lines of horses, heavily packed with wool, hides or other products of the countryside, threaded their way through the throngs in the market-place—excellent horses of the Arab breed.

In these aspects, the town presented anything but an agreeable appearance; but scattered here and there, where the high walls of a compound permitted the proprietor some slight degree of privacy in order to realize his own fancy, and on the outskirts of the town, there were glades and gardens, and meadows whose fresh green beauty, setting forth a riot of colorful shrubs and flowers, gave some slight intimation of the beauty of the table-land which held the capital in its gracious lap.

The garden of the hotel, enclosed by high walls lined with tall, sappy, perfumed eucalyptus trees, was like a tray in which the most beautiful flowers had been thrown in wanton profusion. Birds whistled and trilled; the heavy perfume of the flowers rose languidly and intoxicatingly in the hot, still air of day; bees droned drowsily; the hum of the market-place came distantly to emphasize the peace and beauty of the garden, and from the balcony a vista opened up through the trees of the Vale of Shoa, with the sacred Mount of the Monks hovering dimly in the distance.

After Sevier's brief experience of Aden's sterile, hot ugliness, these bits of beauty were refreshing and delightful. They effectually wiped out the unpleasant impressions that had been burned upon his mind in the course of the month. His heart felt lighter and his mind more at ease.

He read, lounged in a wicker camp-chair in the garden, with a pet antelope eating cabbage-roses from his lap, burying its moist muzzle in the mass of scented petals, with ears quivering delicately and eyes occasionally looking at him with a sudden, straight gaze of trustful curiosity.

Beyond secretly notifying the British minister, Sir Arthur Beveridge, K. C. M. G., K. C. I. E., of his presence in town through Juda bin Ismael's agency, he made no immediate move toward the legation quarter.

In the hotel, careless of the beauty that pressed in on them, was a motley array of guests—chance travelers, hunters who came drifting in from distant little-known mountains and jungles, nondescript frontiersmen whom every explorer meets somewhere, but who otherwise leave no impress upon the country, flotsam flung on strange shores. There were small traders, who had an arrangement with the proprietor to serve their meals at monthly rates; there were a few adventurous and far-sighted promoters of agricultural and mining enterprises, and there were some Germans who had sought sanctuary in the country at the outbreak of war.

These could not accustom themselves to the company of Assyrians, Armenians, Greeks, Turks and other Levantines who frequented the place, and held sullenly aloof from association with the few French and Italians who made the hotel a stopping-place.

They were of various types, but in general looked clean and intelligent and uncomfortable. Sevier knew all their connections; they were mostly managers and assistants of export-and-import houses in the ports along the Red Sea, and interested in little beyond business.

WHEN they discovered that Sevier was an American and not English, as they had supposed, they sought his acquaintance and rather pathetically pumped him for news of the outside world. He warned them of his opposition to German methods of warfare and grand strategy; but they were beyond quibble, and cared only to know when it would be over and what was happening—not dreaming that almost another year would pass before the final stage was set with an American army deploying along the western front.

Sevier found it more to the point that most of them did not seem to realize the terrible menace to the Allied cause that had been averted by the ascendency of the Empress Zeoditou to the throne of the remote country in which they found themselves exiled. In the course of many discussions, however, he soon found two among them who were actively and deeply engaged in Abyssinian affairs.

One was von Schrader, a tall, angular, abrupt man, who would argue a point briefly, never discuss it, and on no account accord an attempt at rebuttal any more consideration than a contemptuous grunt. He was not popular among his merchant compatriots and was, as a matter of fact, very much of a *poseur*, seeking to impress his Abyssinian friends.

His closest companion was a slim, handsome man known as Fritz Schiedel, a man in whose veins mingled the blood of Prussia and Abyssinia. He was sallow, suave, gentle in manner and somewhat restrained, yet prone to gusts of passion. He had received his education in Germany, and, with his companion, von Schrader, considered himself a specialist in military science.

By playing on this conceit, introducing reminiscences of the Mexican frontier and amateurish maneuvers in New England, Sevier spent many happy moments drawing them into elaborate arguments on military science. They expounded German tactics—looking over their shoulders to see that no Englishman was about, though every Britisher in Addis Abeba knew the tactics as well as they.

They proved the French in error, the British dogged but stupid, the Italians unimaginative, the Russians overcautious, the Americans incapable of cohesion, and, in the end, swung to criticism of Abyssinian methods of warfare, with which they were really familiar.

They knew all about the Amhara campaign of 1868. They recited all the mistakes of the Italians that resulted in the terrible disaster of Adua. They explained exactly why the Mahdi failed to make an impression upon the country. And, finally, they demonstrated what would happen to any European power attempting an invasion.

"But suppose an Abyssinian army met another Abyssinian army?" inquired Sevier, with innocent interest.

"Ah!" said von Schrader. "That would be interesting."

"They would eat each other like the snakes of Benares, eh?"

Von Schrader gave a gesture of impatience at the frivolous suggestion.

"It is an inexact problem," he declared.

"All right; let's make it exact. We won't be hurting any one. How large an army do you suggest?"

"Suppose," interposed Schiedel impulsively, his eyes flashing, as the suggestion struck home, "suppose we take a Northern army and a Southern army—one hundred thousand each."

"How many?" exclaimed Sevier.

"One hundred thousand each—that is, warriors. It's not too large an estimate for a mobile force—mixed horse and foot—cannon, *mitrailleuses*, rifles and so forth. Well, they would meet deployed in groups under their *rases*. Rolling country. Some one gets excited—shoots a gun. A spear flies—a curse is called. They rush at each other——"

"Wait a minute! Wait a minute! Two hundred thousand armed men run at each other? What about tactics?"

"Tactics? Oh, to hell with tactics! One

side gets annihilated! *Bass!* The survivors come home all bloody, with eyes flashing, yelling, singing, shooting their hot rifles, covered with trophies!"

Von Schrader stood up and eyed his compatriot of mixed blood with scorn and pity, disgusted that he could so easily forget the importance of the training he had received in Germany.

"To hell with tactics, eh? Well, with just one-eighth the force, disciplined and skilled in tactics, I could break your damned black rabble into little bits—into little dusty bits."

Schiedel jumped up, excited and furious, the hot blood of his Abyssinian mother boiling in him; but von Schrader, slapping his riding-crop against his boot, walked stiffly out of the room with cold indifference before his companion exploded:

"By the blood of the Saviour! My dusty, dirty rabble! What does he mean? The swine! If I couldn't make sausage of his Prussian—" His indignation increased to a spluttering rage. "Do you think he intended to insult me?"

"I'm sure I don't know," said Sevier, with a deprecating smile. "Just his way of emphasizing the superiority of his methods, I suppose."

"Superiority! I know their methods! Don't tell me. I know them. Efficiency! Tear up roses to plant potatoes—kill horses to make sausages—the dog!

"Well, don't you believe in tactics?" asked Sevier, with faint irony.

"Oh, please don't be stupid. Tactics are the natural skill of a fighting man. Napoleon didn't need an architect to plan his battles. Every Abyssinian *ras* knows the value of a flank attack against a stiff, broad line; but the Abyssinians fight in a collection of independent units that gather instinctively at the point of danger.

"The groups are led by *shums*. The *shums* look to the *rases*. The *rases* do as the *negus* has directed. And the *negus* commands in person. None yields. There *must* be a victory. The issue cannot remain in doubt. The commander-in-chief risks his own head in every engagement——"

"It shows the true fighting spirit," said Sevier approvingly. "I hope the Abyssinians never lose it. It would be a terrible thing to see the nation sink beneath the simitars of a lot of infidel Arabs——"

Schiedel jerked his hand to his lips with a startled gesture. Then he sat down heavily, frowning.

"I am German," he said sulkily.

"I suppose so," said Sevier lightly. "It's too bad, because just now Germany's an example of a good country gone wrong. Don't interrupt, please! I don't intend to be offensive, but I've recently come from Europe. I know how things are going, and I tell you Prussia's beaten. The god in the machine is dead. The moment the faith and courage of Abyssinia go, Abyssinia will be dead, too. And good-by to the glory of Abyssinia and its ancient liberty if the Germans and Turks succeed in killing it——"

AT THAT moment a boy entered to say that Sevier's horse was saddled and ready for him. The American rose and left the room, and Schiedel slumped in his chair, glaring at the points of his boot with an expression of misery on his face.

It was a day of lofty blue skies and billowy white clouds. A soft breeze stirred the foliage of the eucalyptus trees, carrying the perfume of meadows to Sevier's nostrils.

All at once his thoughts turned to the people at the legations. Though he had been in Addis Abeba a week, conducting his search for the hunchback, he had not yet called, the fact that there was no representative of America in the country being sufficient to cause this defection to pass unnoticed. He was now well enough known as a trader dealing through Juda bin Ismael's agent to keep him free of suspicion. Therefore he let it be known that he was going visiting, and turned his horse toward the rising slopes eastward of the capital, where the legations lay.

He found the legations scattered like broad South African farms on a slope of generally rising hills, commanding magnificent views to the south and west. The British legation, as usual, was the most pretentious of all.

A square buff-brick structure of dignified proportions, spread wide and low on the easy slope of a hill that rose high behind it and fell sweeping away in front, it commanded an unobstructed view of the expanding vale shimmering in the sunlight, with *tokhuls*, drifting herds of cattle and droves of sheep, lazily cantering horsemen, feathery tufts of eucalyptus clumps and depressions with blue-gray shadows to break up the landscape, which ended in dim horizons with the suggestion of a balancing mountain sketched in.

The grounds, ample and rolling, with a long drive lined with the poplarlike eucalyptus, thatched cottages with whitewashed walls, terraces aglow with amazing banks of roses, carnations, sweet peas and pansies, and cows and horses grazing in the rich meadows, and sheep upon the lawn, immediately suggested England—but a somewhat different England from the land of blue-green shadows, sodden meadows and low-pressing skies—a spacious England, sunny, bright, open and expansive.

He already knew Sir Arthur Beveridge, the minister, a man who could listen as well as talk, was never rushed but acted with decision, deprecated the seriousness of a situation but spoke of his long string of horses with boyish enthusiasm—thorough, accurate, acquiring information in a manner not quite comprehensible, a scholar behind doors, a statesman in the durbar-room, and a sport-loving English gentleman outdoors and in the saddle.

Sevier had also met the consul-general, Albert Whitcomb, whose practical knowledge of Somaliland, where he had explored, fought and administered for a number of years, though he was still a young man, was incomparable and of great practical value. He had dash, courage and determination; all he lacked was imagination to have made him a remarkable cavalry officer.

Major Win Balfour, the military attaché, was a veteran whose military views were dogmatic in theory, though he was naively receptive of any novel suggestions, as, for instance, when Sevier spoke of Jan Smuts' use of the Zulu *impis* mode of attack in driving the Germans from Kilima-Njaro in German East Africa.

Both the minister and the consul-general carried into fact the general principle that where the British flag flies is Britain, for both had their families about them, charming ladies and wonderful flaxen-haired, blue-eyed children with round cheeks blooming with health, and rivaling in color and texture the roses among which they played. Large pink-eyed hares nibbles rose-petals and delicate little dikdiks—diminutive and exquisite antelopes—lifted their dainty hoofs over beds of pansies or danced like fauns about a sun-dial. Dog-carts, English nurses with caps and English nursery-books, English dogs—all seemed colored pictures of an old-fashioned picture of a beautiful old-fashioned country.

Sevier, breathing once more the atmosphere of old-time England with its beauty, grace, natural hospitality and its simple trustfulness in the good-heartedness of every one, began to find it difficult to realize that somewhere in the same hills where this garden bloomed, somewhere perhaps with in a day's ride of a swift pony was El Fetnah, The Storm, and somewhere within the scattered town, darkening already with the long shadows of the western hills, was the hunchback troubadour whom he sought.

Though the memory of El Fetnah's last look as her soul blazed in her eyes and the strange impression that her sigh had upon him as she vanished in the dark could not be effaced, he began to feel less urgent in his desire to discover her. The thought of home and all it stood for all at once became inexpressibly dear, and he felt welling up within him a stronger appreciation of all that was good and desirable in the civilization he struggled to maintain.

He was startled, too, to find that in this atmosphere of England the memory of Miss Whittington began to recur with increasing vividness. He experienced a lively pleasure when he discovered that, as is often the case among Colonial administrators, the Whittingtons and Beveridges were well acquainted at home.

Among the members of the friendly legations there was one, Monsieur Jules Castigny, the French minister, dean of the Allied group, to whom he was presented in his true character, since France took an active and thorough interest in Abyssinian affairs, and Monsieur Castigny seemed thoroughly aware of the tragic nature of the situation in all its *nuances*.

He welcomed Sevier's arrival with a sort of nervous enthusiasm, informing him that a French agent was operating in the country, presumably from Italian Eritrea. He had not yet been able to get in direct touch with him.

In the mean time, while in town, Sevier continued in the character of a trader. To give substance to this impression, he contracted to sell cotton goods with certain Greek and Arab merchants in the bazaar, and took in exchange large quantities of hides and beeswax, which were duly stored in the godowns of Juda bin Ismael.

These transactions gave him an opportunity to keep up a diligent search for the hunchback, since he learned from Maukara that the Arab troubadour had not passed beyond Entoto. The search was fruitless.

At times he felt a strange longing to set his eyes again on El Fetnah. Then he would try desperately to dismiss her from his mind, knowing that if she fell into the hands of the Shoans, it would in all probability mean a ghastly death for her.

The tension under which he had previously worked began to take hold of him again. Disturbing rumors trickled down from the north, from the remote hill town of Dessie, where the Negus Mikael was supposed to have established himself. Direct communication with this town became strangely difficult. This fact reacted in a marked nervousness in the bazaar, the origin of which could not be exactly ascertained. Local traders began to sell feverishly. The markets thinned out. The bullets normally displayed in large quantities vanished from barter.

At last the uncertainty became so great that a flying column of warriors under Lul Seged, a *ras* of noted integrity, was despatched northward to seek information from the dark, sullen king of Wollo without rousing his resentment. Every rider, then, vho came from the north was hailed anxiously for word from the Negus Mikael and iews from Dessie.

The North, having once swallowed Lul Seged, remained ominously silent.

AN ATMOSPHERE of melancholy bathed the country, made stupefying with the ieavy scent of flowers, on a night when ievier was at the British legation. He vondered if it were possible that that safron glow might yet reflect with blood? 'he tranquil though gloomy loveliness of he scene seemed to make such a thought bsurd. Even as it occurred to him, he was oused from his reverie by the sound of lattering hoofs and the pretty laughter f women.

A party on horseback came clattering up ie drive, turned sharply into the graveled path of the terrace. A chorus of cheerful greetings, laughter, the champ and fretting of the ponies and calls for the hostlers shook him suddenly back to the implausible reality of his surroundings.

All the faces seemed familiar to him. He approached, laughing, to greet them, and heard his name called in introduction to a slim young lady in a neat buff riding-costume. Then he felt a shock that was partly a thrill of pleasure and partly blank astonishment.

She was Barbara Whittington, daughter of the political resident of Aden.

Instantly a flood of memory swept Sevier back to Aden and that last moonlit night—the moment of involuntary tenderness that had overcome his calculated restraint when Barbara Whittington returned the pressure of his hand despite every prejudice of her northern temperament, only to have the spell broken by the calm, ironic voice of her father. He felt his head get warm with embarrassment. He experienced a marked acceleration of the pulse to find in her greeting a cheerful, enthusiastic cordiality, a sort of serene delight that both flattered him and left him a bit baffled.

The cool northerner, with eyes the color of a clear summer sky fixed upon him with unchanging serenity, was undoubtedly pleased to see him. But beneath the calmness of the eyes there gleamed the hint of an agitated spirit.

Amid the babel of voices, Sevier, after the first words of greeting, exclaimed:

"How in the world did you get here? Has your father come up?"

"You see now," she said, "that you are not the only one who can invade Abyssinia alone."

'But you didn't come alone?"

"Not exactly. My uncle, General Whittington, who is on his return to India, heard there was something interesting happening up here. So up he came. They let me come, too, as soon as they found there was no danger——"

"What!" said Sevier, astounded at the resident's easy acceptance of the new conditions. "I beg your pardon; but really they ought to have realized there's never any danger until you're in the middle of it. Then—well, then it's too late."

"Why, nothing the least bit exciting happened. It was wonderfully picturesque, but, to tell the truth, I was rather disappointed."

Sevier felt a slight chill of resentment. Miss Whittington's light, breathless, flippant tone seemed out of character for one thing. He looked furtively at the slim, cool figure, unruffled after her ride, face delicately flushed, clear blue eyes glittering with the pleasure and excitement of the moment, and all at once he wondered, with a touch of exasperation, at that characteristic of women that makes them talk glibly of possibilities that should essentially appall them.

Miss Whittington reminded him of a slim calla lily rising on its long, clean stalk above the scrub and litter of the field in which it grows, wondering at the confusion that is flung about her, yet unable to drop her head to look at it and understand it better. In the clean, sharp features he saw a bright intelligence dominating a normally healthy heart—a set of conventional prejudices overlying a mild sentimentalism.

She seemed cool, level-headed, vivacious, but with the calm, unimaginative sentiment of her people. He knew well enough that her sentimentality could be charming.

All at once, clear as an image, he saw before him the glowing eyes of El Fetnah, melting with tenderness——

With a gesture of impatience, he turned to meet General Whittington.

DINNER was unconventional, animated and prolonged. General Whittington, a first-class *raconteur*, and a soldier whose service had been along many strange frontiers, ruled the board so effectually that genuine regret that he was obliged to return to Djibouti on the following day in time to catch the *City of Lahore* for Bombay grew momentarily. When a despatch was handed to Mr. Beveridge, therefore, and he excused his opening it with the remark: "It's about your train, General," the lively chatter about the table came to an end.

As the minister ran his eyes over the contents of the note, Sevier instantly detected a subtle, startling change of expression. A moment later, however, he remarked in a clear, dry voice, with a note of casualness:

"Well, that does it! You will have to miss the *City of Lahore*, after all, General. The railway line to Djibouti is cut—the wires are down, too.

For a moment no one spoke. All experienced a slight shock at the announcement. It seemed to imply sudden peril.

"What does it mean?" asked Miss Whittington, her clear voice betraying a sort of pleasurable excitement.

"We don't know quite," replied the minister carefully. "It may be nothing of any importance."

"Oh, my dear Barbara," interposed Mrs. Beveridge brightly, "the natives use the telegraph-wires to make ornaments. Every time a wretched young man falls in love, communication is liable to be broken. And it's such a ghastly romantic country!"

There was a general laugh of relief. Shortly after, the guests rose and entered the drawing-room, where there was singing and music, and a revival of the high spirits that had characterized the meal.

The minister, however, made an opportunity to cut out Sevier and Castigny.

When they were well separated from the rest of the party, he told them he had received a report of a rumor circulated in the bazaars by riders who had arrived a couple of hours previously on blown horses from the direction of Ankober, in the north.

"Yes, yes!" said the French minister, with excitement. His face took on an apoplectic flush. Sevier, with hands clenched in his pockets, tried to stifle a presentiment.

"These riders have come from Lul Seged. Lul Seged, it appears, got in touch with the Negus Mikael at Ankober——"

"Good!" exclaimed Castigny. "You say the couriers come from Lul Seged? Good! That implies——"

Looking at Castigny without a change of expression, the British minister continued:

"I'm sorry to say that the Negus Mikael was accompanied by an army of over fifty thousand warriors. Lul Seged and his six thousand men have been annihilated—utterly destroyed. Mikael's force is sweeping down on us, with nothing that I know of to oppose to——"

After a moment's silence, Castigny reached in his pocket and drew out a cigar, which he lighted with deliberation.

"In that case," he said calmly, "there is some work for us to do—*hein?*"

The French minister was right. The next instalment of "The Witch of Gondar" is one of thrilling interest. See January EVERYBODY'S—out December 15th.

Behind *the* Lines

Imagine Working as a Spy in the Enemy's Army, with Discovery Meaning Immediate Death! That's Adventure. Is It Remarkable That So Few People Are Qualified for the Job?

By Hugh S. Martin

Formerly Captain, Intelligence Service, U. S. A.

A SECRET agent behind the lines! We shudder at the sound. A prowler in the dark—a thief in the night! Faint indeed is the glory of the spy. Even though the fates of armies and nations may rest upon him, his is an ignominious lot.

The first snows of winter had fallen upon the barren hills and impenetrable forests of that vast expanse of arctic wilderness held by the North Russian Expeditionary Forces. In a little village near the front lines of one of the American sectors, a group of officers were huddled round a rude table of boards which occupied the center of a box car.

Seated at the head of the council-board was an American colonel. Spread out upon the table were many charts, maps and typewritten reports.

Following a penetrating creak of the side door, as it was pulled back sufficiently to permit another man to squeeze himself through, Lieutenant Robert Elmore entered the car, saluted and stood at attention.

Except for the fact that he was dressed in the uniform of an American officer, he was the same Robert Elmore who, together with Zarin, the famous Russian secret-service agent, had made such a brilliant record in counter-espionage work in Russia. Two months before he had been in the midst of an important case in Petrograd when he had received orders to report without delay for service with the newly arrived North Russian Expeditionary Forces. Taking a hurried leave of his friend Zarin, he had made his way northward, and two weeks later had found himself attached to the Allied Intelligence Service in the arctic regions.

"Lieutenant Elmore," the colonel began, "we have just read and considered your report of enemy movements. The situation is this: If the Bolsheviks succeed in bringing up those ten heavy guns which they are mounting on flat cars at Vologda and which, according to your report, they will have ready for use in two weeks, it will mean that our position here will be rendered untenable. We, therefore, must pursue one of two courses. Either we must retire from our present position and destroy the railway line behind us or we must attack their positions before the arrival of the heavy artillery. And we don't intend to retire."

It would not have taken a particularly keen eye to observe that these last words met with the entire approval of those present. The fact was, they were at that moment holding the most vital position on the entire North Russian front, and withdrawal would have resulted in disaster.

"You refer in your report to the long bridge which crosses the Mosha River," the colonel continued. "That bridge must be destroyed simultaneously with our attack. Its destruction will not only prevent the enemy from retreating with the armored train with which he now menaces us but it will likewise prevent the sending-up of reenforcements from the south."

Leaning forward, he looked straight at the young lieutenant.

"Elmore," he said, "we intend to attack and carry the enemy positions on this front

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in just ten days. What means have you for arranging for the destruction of the bridge at the same time?"

This inquiry was one to which Elmore had already given considerable thought. He knew that some day he would be called upon to answer that very question.

"Sir," he answered, "it will be impossible to approach the bridge from the north. In my opinion, its destruction can only be effected through cooperation with one of the Russian secret organizations operating behind the lines. I believe they have a certain amount of explosives at Vologda, and I think that would be the logical point from which to make the attempt."

"Have you any means of getting into touch with one of those secret organizations?" the colonel inquired.

"I have, sir," was the reply.

"Very good. Then, if you will take the thing in hand, I shall expect that bridge to be put out of commission between midnight and dawn on the twentieth day of this month. It is my intention to attack at four o'clock on the morning of that day."

A few minutes later, Robert Elmore stepped out into the chilling, bracing air of early winter. Thrusting his hands into the pockets of a heavy fur-lined coat, he set off in the direction of a log cabin in the distance. There was a gleam of satisfaction in his eyes, and the quickness of his step denoted impatience.

"Action!" he murmured. "Action at last!"

THE picturesque old city of Vologda was witnessing strange sights. There was activity on the once quiet, untroubled streets. Men hurried about here and there, entering and departing from newly requisitioned buildings which had been transformed into various departments having to do with the direction of war. Long lines of troops, illy clad in uncouth and strangely discordant uniforms, passed in almost constant procession, occasionally moving aside to make way for lumbering trucks laden with supplies and munitions.

Small groups of women gathered round the few stalls which still remained open in the market-place. They spoke in low, hushed tones and glanced gravely toward the ominous scenes of activity. Their faces were set with expressions of vague terror. Each day they gathered thus—hoping and praying that the Allied troops were drawing nearer and that the hour of their deliverance might be close at hand.

From among a group of soldiers loitering about the railway station, waiting orders to entrain, a straggling, disreputable-looking individual appeared, limping painfully upon a heavy cane. Wound about his stiffened knee was a bandage of dirty rags. A heavy fur cap pulled down over his head almost hid his eyes from view. A great sheepskin collar was turned up over his neck and face.

There was nothing about him to rouse the interest of the loitering crowd from which he had emerged. His dress was that of the peasant soldier or laborer—and certainly Russia had long since become accustomed to every conceivable type of wounded humanity.

Limping slowly along, the cripple made his way across the plaza directly in front of the station and paused for a moment before a small, stuffy restaurant. Turning about, he entered the place, seated himself with an effort at a table in the rear of the room and ordered a wretched meal of black bread, *kasha* and sugarless tea. He did not order a more imposing variety, for the very simple reason that there was nothing further to be had.

Without removing his cap, he pulled back the sheepskin collar. There were lines of weariness in his unwashed, unshaven face. Having eaten with apparent relish the food which had been placed before him, he ordered another glass of tea. For a long time he sat there. Occasionally he would take a sip from the glass, then lean back and gaze thoughtfully into space.

Another straggler entered the room and selected an adjoining table.

"*Chai!*" he yelled toward an open door in the rear.

"*Slushaoo!*" answered a gruff voice in the distance.

The newcomer slouched down in his chair to wait the arrival of the inevitable glass of tea. Looking across the table, he beheld the preoccupied countenance of the cripple.

"Where from, comrade?" he inquired, in that abrupt, unconventional manner so characteristic of the Russian.

Before replying, the cripple reached into an inner pocket and took out a paper, which he unfolded and held out to the newcomer.

It was an order from the commandant of the Fifth Siberian Army, certifying that the bearer, Boris Ivanovitch Gushkof, was unfit for military service by reason of wounds received in action.

"I am on my way home," he answered. "With the aid of God and the Saint Nikolai, I hope to get there in another week."

The newcomer took the paper, examined it sharply and returned it across the table. It is doubtful that he understood what was written upon it, but, nevertheless, he appeared satisfied.

Fifteen minutes later, the cripple rose and slowly made his way out of the little restaurant. Taking the principal thoroughfare, which led from the station to the business section of the city, he walked for perhaps half a mile, then turned into a long, narrow side street. Occasionally, as he passed along, he turned to look at the house-numbers. He did not pause to look behind. If he had done so, he would have seen a solitary figure, whose face was hidden behind a heavy kangaroo collar.

Toward the end of the street, the cripple stopped before a small white house bearing the sign: "Doctor Lukovsky." For a moment he looked closely at the sign, then turned to open the street gate. In doing so, he stumbled over a stone, but quickly recovered himself and passed through the gate along the gravel walk which led to the entrance-door.

His ring was answered by an elderly bespectacled gentleman with heavy gray beard.

"Is this Dr. Lukovsky?" asked the cripple.

"Yes," was the rather abrupt reply.

"I would speak with you concerning a matter of importance," said the visitor.

"Come in," replied the doctor, opening the door and ushering the cripple into a room containing long lines of shelves filled with bottles and medical paraphernalia. "Sit down," he added, indicating a chair.

"I have come to you at the suggestion of a mutual friend," said the cripple, seating himself.

"What is your business?"

"The restoration of Russia," was the cripple's code-answer.

"What are you willing to pay?"

"My property, my life and my honor," was the reply, and at the same time the password of the Secret Brotherhood for the Restoration of Russia.

Dr. Lukovsky stepped forward and extended a hand to the cripple, who rose with surprising agility and returned the grip of his host.

"My brother," said the doctor, "I am at your service."

For the next thirty minutes the two sat together, conversing in low tones. When they had finished their conversation, the cripple rose to go. Lukovsky accompanied him to the door. Once more he firmly grasped the other's hand.

"You have two days before you," he said. "May God preserve you!"

Passing into the street, the cripple slowly made his way back to the principal thoroughfare and turned down toward the station. From a safe distance behind, the solitary figure with the kangaroo collar was following.

Entering the station, the cripple produced his order from the commandant of the Fifth Siberian Army and, after a brief conversation with the transport officer, received a military pass entitling him to transportation to the town of Plesetskaya on the Vologda-Archangel railway. Two hours later he was seated in a fourth-class coach of a north-bound train.

IT WAS a cold, dry night of arctic winter. A full, clear moon cast its silvery rays over the limitless expanse of snow-clad northland. From the rear door of a peasant's house in a little village near the Mosha River, the cripple stepped forth and cautiously made his way along a winding trail leading from the village to the edge of the frozen stream. He was without his cane, and his bandaged knee seemed no longer to trouble him. In each hand he carried a large, heavy suitcase.

Arriving at the river's edge, he put down his burden and rested for a few moments. There, at the foot of the trail, was a large hole cut in the thick ice. Here and there were wooden tubs, hewn and put together by primitive yet ingenious peasant hands. Further back were many crude racks made of twisted saplings. This was the village washing-ground and the source of its winter's water-supply.

Leading off to the right, toward the railway, was another trail. Picking up his heavy load, the cripple moved on until he emerged from the shadows of the deep wood into the open, near the head of the Mosha bridge.

Standing for a few moments in the utter stillness of the night, peering to the right and left and convincing himself that no living being was near, he moved forward and began slowly to ascend the steep embankment, laboriously pulling the suitcases behind him. Within a few moments he had reached the top and crawled beneath the head of the bridge.

Fifteen minutes later, having finished his task, he crawled out and began descending the embankment. The suitcases had been left behind. Under an arm he carried a square box containing batteries, and, as he slowly moved away, he carefully unwound a ball of fine wire. Passing along the side of the embankment, unrolling the wire as he went, he reached a spot some five hundren feet from the bridge. Here he put down the battery and moved forward a few steps to inspect a large log which lay directly across his path. Brushing the snow from it, he sat down. Taking out his watch, he saw that it was half-past three. He had another half-hour to wait. Pulling his sheepskin collar more closely about his head and face and sinking his hands deep into his pockets, he settled down to wait patiently the hour of four.

At the edge of the wood from which he had recently emerged, a solitary figure, hidden in the shadows of the underbrush, was regarding him with curious eyes.

For many long moments the cripple sat there immovable. Suddenly he raised his head and pulled back the sheepskin collar from his ears. From the opposite side of the embankment he distinctly caught the sound of voices. In another instant there appeared upon the tracks a patrol of perhaps a dozen Bolshevik troops. Seeing them approach, the cripple quickly dropped down behind the log on which he had been seated. But in the brightness of the moonlight his movement had been detected by one of the approaching soldiers, who immediately set up a wild shout, and a few seconds later the cripple was surrounded.

Rising form his hiding-place, he began moving slowly away in the opposite direction, thus leading the captors from the battery and wires. Assuming a painful limp, he mounted the railway track and, under orders of the commander of the patrol, moved off slowly toward the south between a double row of guards. A few minutes later he was a prisoner in the village railway station, a quarter of a mile away.

THE patrol commander took charge of the investigation. Ordering the prisoner to take a seat on a bench in the small waiting-room, he began.

"Well, give an account of yourself."

"I am on my way home," replied the prisoner, taking from his pocket the order from the commandant, and handing it over to his questioner.

Slowly and with great difficulty the commander read the order aloud.

"Where do you live?" he asked.

"In the village of Orensk, near Plesetskaya," answered the prisoner, without hesitation. "I had a ticket to Plesetskaya, but the train stopped at a *kipitok*, and while I was getting some hot water, it pulled out. Because of my wounded leg, I could not run and was left behind. I decided to walk on to Plesetskaya; it can't be more than ten miles."

"It is nearer fifty," replied the commander, adding suspiciously, "But why were you hiding behind the log there?"

"I was tired and sat down to rest," wearily answered the prisoner, affecting a look of deepest anguish. "When I heard you coming, I became frightened. Thought I would hide until you passed by."

The prisoner's manner and his plausible explanation were beginning to appeal to the commander.

"It is my duty to arrest all persons found along the railroad tracks—and I have special orders to guard the Mosha bridge," he said. "If you had not been found so near the bridge, I might let you go; but——"

Turning to several of his comrades who stood near by, he conversed with them for some moments in a low voice. They seemed to favor the release of the prisoner on condition that he not mention it to any one.

"If the commandant found out we had done this, it would go hard with us," said one.

Disregarding this observation, the patrol commander turned to the prisoner and was about to stipulate the conditions under which he would be released.

At that moment, the very earth beneath them seemed to tremble, and from the direction of the bridge there came a deafening explosion.

One of the soldiers, who had been standing guard outside the door, staggered into the room, crossing himself violently.

"Gospodi sposee nas!" he cried. "The Mosha bridge—it is blown to pieces!"

The commander of the patrol turned about and glared wildly at the prisoner.

"So!" he shouted. "That's what you were doing there!"

Without waiting for a reply, he ordered manacles placed upon the prisoner's wrists and stationed a heavy guard about him.

From the village came the shrieks and shouts of the awakened and terrified populace.

"You will be sent to Vologda to-morrow!" cried the patrol commander heatedly, adding, "Take my advice and begin praying, because you are as good as dead now."

The prisoner made no reply. Flashing a look of defiance at his captors, he settled back into a state of complete bewilderment. With one of his manacled hands he managed to reach for his watch. It was five minutes past four. His bewildered expression gave way to a faint smile.

ON THE morning of the third day after the destruction of the Mosha bridge, a stranger stopped before the residence of Dr. Lukovsky. His unshaven face was almost hidden by a great kangaroo collar. Pausing for a moment to make sure of the house, he entered the gate, walked forward and pressed a button beside the front door. The ring was answered by the doctor.

"Dr. Lukovsky, I believe," said the stranger.

"Yes," was the reply. "And what may I do for you?"

"I would like to speak with you concerning a matter which I am sure will prove of interest," answered the stranger.

Without a word, the doctor pulled open the door and motioned to his caller to enter. A moment later they were seated in the office.

"I am a stranger to you, Dr. Lukovsky," began the visitor, "and I have not the slightest means of identifying myself. The truth is, I am a stranger in the city. I can only assure you, as one interested in the same things you are interested in, that you may trust me."

The doctor looked at him sharply.

"I don't know that I understand what you are driving at," he said.

The visitor paused for a moment, then continued,

"I happen to know that some days ago you received a caller—a man who was supposedly afflicted with a crippled leg—a stiffened knee, I believe."

There was not the slightest indication in the doctor's expression or manner which would indicate that he comprehended.

"Well?" he observed, coldly.

"That man came here on a mission of great importance," the stranger said. "I might say a mission involving gravest personal danger to him——"

"My dear sir," the doctor interrupted, with an air of extreme impatience, "I have not the slightest idea what you are talking about. Of course I have a great many patients who call to see me. Now, if you have any professional business to transact with me or anything rational to say, I shall be glad to continue the interview. Otherwise, I must ask that we consider it terminated." He rose and placed his hand upon the door-knob.

"Perhaps when you have heard what I have to say, Dr. Lukovsky, you will consider me somewhat more rational," the visitor went on. "I have come primarily to tell you that the man who called upon you for instructions as to how he might obtain explosives with which to blow up the Mosha River bridge is now confined in the local military prison awaiting execution."

Lukovsky remained standing, with his hand resting on the knob. He did not open the door.

"I do not know the extent of your influence, Doctor," the stranger continued, "through I imagine it must be very far-reaching. If you value the life of the man who is now in prison, you will hear my suggestions. Naturally, you think I am seeking to draw you into a trap. But if you will only permit me to state my case, you may find it possible to save a friend."

There was a compelling earnestness in the stranger's plea. Dropping his hand from the knob, the doctor faced him.

The stranger threw back his great

fur-lined coat and took from an inner pocket several papers. Selecting two folded sheets, he replaced the others.

"Here are two sheets of paper," he went on. "On the first are written certain instructions which are to be delivered to the prisoner verbally. You must find some way to do that, Doctor. The second sheet is to be left with the prisoner at the same time the verbal instructions are given him. Surely, Doctor, you know of some one who can do this."

Lukovsky took the two sheets and read them over slowly. First, he read the one entitled: "Verbal Instructions." There was an expression of complete perplexity on his face.

Then he turned to the second sheet—the one which was to be left with the prisoner. As he read it over, there came into his face the faintest light of comprehension.

"My dear sir," he finally said, "I wish I knew what it is you have in mind. These papers mean absolutely nothing to me. Apparently you have confused me with some one else. You say there is a prisoner in jail who is to be executed?"

"Yes; to-morrow."

"Well, how this piece of paper or these instructions which are written here can save him is beyond me—but if you think they can, and you are so deeply interested in his welfare, I suggest that you try to take care of the matter yourself."

For a while the visitor said nothing. He realized the futility of further conversation.

"In any case," he said, rising, "I shall leave the papers with you."

"If it will relieve your apparently overwrought mind to do so—all right."

A moment later the man passed from Dr. Lukovsky's house and made his way up the small side street. There was the faintest trace of a smile on his half-hidden face.

CONFINED in a small cell in the Vologda military prison, the cripple awaited judgment at the hands of the Commission of Inquiry. His face, which once bore lines of pain and weariness, now displayed an expression of defiant resignation. He knew what must be the inevitable result. He knew that inquiry would establish the fact that the order from the commandant of the Fifth Siberian Army was a forgery. He knew that inquiry in the village of Orensk would prove that no person of the name he had given had ever lived there. He knew that the destruction of the Mosha bridge had been investigated and that the wires and battery which he had taken there would be found near the spot where he was seized. These facts would be sufficient. He knew what the verdict would be.

High above him was a small, heavily barred opening. The faint light which shone through was rapidly fading into blackness. The prisoner sighed in the thought that another long night lay before him. He hoped that it would be his last. If death awaited him—as he knew that it did—then let it come soon.

A very slight noise came from the heavy door of his cell. The shutter of the small opening, through which the guard flashed his lantern and looked in upon him at regular intervals, was moved aside. Quickly rising and stepping forward, the prisoner sought to peer into the darkness beyond. He saw nothing. He had not heard the monotonous, measured footsteps of the prison guard, yet he had distinctly heard the shutter being pulled back. He put his fingers through the opening to make sure. At that instant he heard two softly spoken words, which sent a thrill through his body.

"Robert Elmore," came the voice. Then there was silence.

"Who is it?" quickly answered the prisoner, desperately seeking to control his voice. There was no answer. "God!" he murmured, as he stood there, immovable. All was stillness without. A cold shiver crept down his spine. His heart was beating violently. Had he been dreaming? Was he losing his reason? And then he heard a very faint sound like the crackling of crisp paper. Putting his ear to the opening, he listened breathlessly. And then, once more, he heard the two whispered words:

"Robert Elmore."

"Yes—who is it?"

"Take this paper," came the softly spoken answer from without. "Hide it safely in your clothes, where it cannot be found. To-morrow you will go before the Commission of Inquiry. Do not answer any question or make any statement whatever. Understand? Here—quick!"

From far down the corridor came the measured footsteps of the guard. A piece of paper was thrust through the opening.

Hurriedly taking it, the prisoner heard the shutter closed, followed by a faint sound of rapidly retreating footsteps.

"Merciful God!" he murmured. He was wet with perspiration. A hundred thoughts flashed through his mind. Who could have known that he was Robert Elmore? Was it a trap? Had he betrayed himself? He shuddered. Had the whispered words been those of a friend? Why should he be warned not to answer any question or make any statement before the commission? And what could be written on the sheet of paper, which he had been told to hide where it could not be found? Oh, for a match! Why should he hide the paper? He remembered that there was a slit in the lining of his cap, which had not been discovered by those who had searched him after he had been brought to Vologda. He might hide it there—but why should he?

For many hours the prisoner lay upon his bunk of boards, staring with wide eyes into the black void above him.

"It is a trap," he finally told himself. "They want to trick me into revealing my identity, and they suspect that I may still have something hidden about me which they have not discovered. They will search me to-morrow for the paper they have given me, thinking that their ruse will force me to betray some secret hiding-place in my clothing. I will fool them."

With the coming of dawn, a faint light crept through the opening high above him. Picking up the mysterious paper, which had fallen to the floor beside him, the prisoner read the strange lines which were typewritten upon it. A few moments later, he sank into a deep sleep.

IT WAS ten o'clock in the morning when Robert Elmore was taken from his cell and escorted under heavy guard to a low stone building near by, which was occupied by the Comission of Inquiry.

In a large room on the ground floor a number of persons had gathered to witness the proceedings. In the rear of the room was a long table, behind which were seated the three members of the commission.

The chairman of the commission, who was seated in the center of the group, bore himself with the full dignity of his exalted station. While he may not have been versed in legal procedure, he had at least observed, during his fifteen years of service as janitor to the Tenth Criminal Court, District of Saratov, that the outstanding attribute of a presiding judge was a dignity at once cold and imperious.

In accordance with Revolutionary usage, one of his associates was a sailor and the other a soldier.

Elmore was led forward and seated in the witness-chair. Two guards stood directly behind him. Assuming a fitting poise, the chairman rose.

"Silence!" he commanded in a deep, menacing voice. This was the official signal that the Commission of Inquiry was formally in session.

Taking up a long handwritten protocol, the chairman proceeded to read aloud the findings of the commission in the case of a certain person calling himself Boris Ivanovitch Gushkof, guilty of espionage.

There was nothing new in the first part of the report. It contained just what Elmore knew it would. Beginning with the statement that the Mosha River bridge had been destroyed at about four o'clock on the morning of the twentieth of the present month, it referred to the fact that the prisoner had been captured a few minutes before the explosion not more than five hundred feet from the bridge, that the order found upon him, purporting to have been signed by the commandant of the Fifth Siberian Army, was a forgery, that no such person as Gushkof had ever lived in the village of Orensk, that the discovery of a battery and wires leading to the bridge proved that its destruction had been planned.

The chairman then reached that part of the report concerning which the prisoner was in ignorance. Almost simultaneously with the destruction of the bridge, the American forces had attacked the Bolshevist positions on the northern railway front and had advanced for more than twenty miles to the south, capturing hundreds of prisoners and vast stores of supplies and munitions, including an entire armored train and several locomotives.

It was clear to the commission that the destruction of the bridge had been carefully prearranged in connection with the attack.

Having completed the reading of the protocol, the chairman placed the papers upon the table and remained standing. Clearing his throat in a manner calculated to produce a proper degree of attention, he turned to the prisoner.

"What is your rightful name?" he inquired rather sneeringly.

The prisoner, who sat calmly stroking a three weeks' growth of beard, made no reply.

After a pause, the chairman continued, this time somewhat more sharply:

"Did you understand my question? What is your rightful name?"

No answer.

The chairman leaned forward slightly and glared at the prisoner, who seemed to have centered his attention upon some object on the opposite side of the room. The face of the chairman was turning red. Suddenly striking the table violently with his clenched fist, he shouted:

"Speak, fool! Are you deaf?"

As far as the prisoner's interest in the proceedings was concerned, the chairman might as well have been shouting at the life-size likeness of bewhiskered Karl Marx which hung on the rear wall.

For a moment the chairman was beside himself with rage.

"Listen to me, idiot!" he thundered. "If you do not care to try to save yourself from death, then perhaps you may be interested in the means which may be employed in putting you to death. It lies within the power of this commission not only to pronounce upon you the sentence of death but likewise to pronounce the manner in which you shall be executed. Do you prefer to be shot or will you have me sentence you to death by torture? Now will you speak?"

The prisoner gave not the faintest indication that he had heard any word which had been spoken to him. As a matter of fact, he had not, or, if he had heard the words, certainly he had not comprehended their meaning. From the moment the chairman had finished reading the findings of the commission, the prisoner had concentrated his mind upon an old anonymous poem which was pasted in the family scrap-book back home, beginning:

Behold this ruin; 'tis a skull
Once of ethereal beauty full.

There was something about the poem which he had always liked. As a child he had memorized it. Many a time it had quieted him in a moment of agitation. Many a night it had soothed his restless spirit into sleep and forgetfulness. At the moment, it seemed particularly appropriate.

The chairman, still red with rage, and temporarily forgetting the dignity of his office, stamped the floor with his foot and wildly waved his hands above his unshorn, disheveled locks.

"Miserable pig!" he shrieked in a choking voice. "Answer me! *Chort vozmee vas!* Speak! Oh! Ach!"

THE prisoner was now mentally engaged in poetical speculation concerning the ruin's fingers.

To hew the rock or wear the gem
Can little now avail to them.

There was a suggestion of froth appearing in the corners of the honorable chairman's mouth. With a final hopeless wave of his arms, he sat down heavily and began conferring excitedly with his two colleagues. Neither offered the slightest objection to the tentative sentence which he submitted. As they both vigorously nodded their heads, the chairman leaned back in his chair and cast a ferocious glance at the preoccupied prisoner, who was just reaching the last verse of the woeful soliloquy:

If from the bowers of ease they fled
To seek affliction's humble shed,
These feet with angels' wings shall vie
And tread the palace of the sky.

After several moments the chairman sufficiently reassembled his faculties to pick up a pen and snatch a sheet of paper from the end of the table. Leaning forward, he wrote hurriedly, wrathfully, the sentence of the commission. With a final vindictive flourish, he signed his name, tossed the pen aside and rose.

"Silence!" he shouted to the spellbound, almost breathlessly silent spectators.

Taking up the paper, he read the sentence to the prisoner.

"This prisoner"—his voice had lost its tone of dignity—"calling himself Boris Ivanovitch Gushkof, which is a lie, but whose rightful name we do not know—having been found guilty of espionage against the Red armies of Soviet Russia, and furthermore having displayed gross contempt for this honorable Commission of Inquiry, is hereby sentenced by the commission to suffer the pangs of torture and death."

There was a general commotion and much whispering and gasping among the audience as the chairman took his seat. Then an oppressive silence.

From the rear of the room, immediately behind the table occupied by the three members of the commission, a door, which had stood slightly ajar, creaked and opened. A frail figure entered and closed the door behind him. There was something almost ghostlike in his pale, expressionless face. For an instant he turned his dark, luminous eyes toward the prisoner—and for the first time since that indifferent individual entered the witness-chair, his preoccupied expression began to show signs of emotion.

It was Zarin who stood before him!

MOVING forward until he had reached a point directly in front of the prisoner, Zarin turned about and faced the members of the commission.

The chairman and his colleagues bowed to him with respectful recognition. They knew the identity and station of the man who stood before them.

"Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of the Commission of Inquiry," he began, "may I crave the indulgence of the honorable commission for the purpose of making a few remarks which I think will now be in order?"

"Your request is granted," answered the chairman.

"From the credentials I presented to you this morning, you know who I am," resumed the speaker, and the three commissioners again bowed their heads respectfully. They knew that they were listening to the director of the Third Section of the Counter-espionage Department of Soviet Russia.

"Gentlemen," said the speaker, "it is seldom that men have had the privilege of witnessing a sight such as you have seen here to-day. You have had a demonstration of loyalty such as, I venture to say, the annals of history do not record."

The commissioners were beginning to look perplexed. The chairman moved nervously in his chair. Even the uncommunicative prisoner permitted himself to lean slightly forward.

"The prisoner here, as you have noticed," Zarin continued, "has steadfastly refused to answer any question or make any statement whatever. I shall now demonstrate to you that he is capable of speech."

Addressing the prisoner, Zarin said,

"Will you now state to the honorable commissioners the orders you received from me, your chief, before you departed on your most recent mission?"

Straightening up in his chair, the prisoner replied in a clear, firm voice,

"My orders were, honorable gentlemen of the Commission of Inquiry, not to make any statement or answer any question before any commission of inquiry."

For some seconds the dumfounded commissioners sat still. Then the chairman suddenly rose as if to speak. With a wave of his hand, Zarin motioned to him to sit down. The gesture was obeyed.

"Some time ago," Zarin resumed, "I received information of a most vital nature, which led me to believe that a plot was being laid to destroy the Mosha River bridge simultaneously with a determined attack on our northern railway front by the American forces. Owing to the extreme delicacy of the undertaking I had planned, I picked whom I then believed to be—and whom I now know to be—the most trustworthy man in the service.

"I had reason to believe that certain persons serving under the Bolshevist command on the northern front were implicated in the plot; therefore I deemed it wise to take action without regard to the northern command. It was I who gave the prisoner the forged order from the commandant of the Fifth Siberian Army."

As the speaker paused, there was an utter stillness throughout the room. The three commissioners stared at him dazedly. The prisoner was making a desperate effort to look natural.

"At the very moment the patrol seized the prisoner here," Zarin said, "he was lying in wait to foil the attempt of the conspirators—and, I may add, had it not been for the action of the patrol—although, of course, they were acting in pursuance of their duty—this man would have prevented the destruction of the bridge and would have discovered the identity of the conspirators, who are at this moment unknown and left free to continue their operations."

The chairman of the commission, being

momentarily speechless, began clearing his throat. His recently flushed face was rapidly losing its color.

"And now," Zarin went on, "I desire to bring to the attention of the honorable commission the obvious inefficiency of those to whom you entrust the duty of making thorough search of persons suspected of espionage. I shall now ask the prisoner to produce his credentials, showing that he is an agent of my section of the Counter-espionage Department."

Reaching for the fur cap which lay upon the floor beside him, the prisoner produced through a small slit in its lining a paper which had been folded into a small square. Calmly unfolding it, he presented it to Zarin, who, in turn, placed it upon the table before the thoroughly bewildered commissioners. Immediately they leaned their heads forward. The sailor commissioner and the soldier commissioner being unable to read, depended in such matters upon the superior accomplishments of the ex-janitor commissioner. Taking up the paper, the chairman read aloud:

> "The bearer, Agent 28, of the Third Section of the Counter-espionage Department of Soviet Russia, is to be given every consideration at the hands of those officials to whom he shall present this document.
>
> "Zarin—Chief of the Third Section.
> "Petrograd."

In the lower left-hand corner of the paper was the official seal of the department.

There was a quick exchange of glances between the commissioners. The document, with its impressive seal, had swept all doubt from the minds of the soldier and the sailor. Only the chairman seemed inclined to seek further clarification. If his dignity had suffered contempt at the hands of the prisoner, it had now been dealt a staggering blow by the astounding turn of affairs. Suddenly a thought managed to enter his mind. Half rising from his chair, he cried out, with something of an air of impatience:

"But why didn't the prisoner show us this paper before? It would have saved us all this trouble."

"And it might have saved *him* his *life*," Zarin answered coldly, and paused long enough for the thrust to sting. "Fortunately," he continued, "I arrived in time to take care of that. I repeat to you that I gave the prisoner here strict orders not to reveal himself to any person while engaged in his recent assignment, for the very simple reason that I strongly suspected—as I now more strongly suspect—that certain persons, even certain officials, in this territory—I might say in this very city—have been and are now conspiring with the enemy."

Zarin spoke slowly, deliberately. There was something even slightly suggestive of insinuation in his manner.

"Gentlemen," he went on, pointing toward the prisoner, "look upon this man—and thank your stars that you have such a privilege. Look upon a man who refuses to speak when a word might save his life—a man who would have suffered the pangs of torture and death rather than disobey an order."

For some moments the chairman had been struggling desperately to comprehend the full significance of recent events. He had sat there dazedly, as if he had been stunned by a low on the head. But these last dramatic words had been too much for him.

"Comrade," he began, making an effort to suppress the tremor in his voice, "I have no words—I want to apologize—to congratulate——"

"You only sought to do your duty," Elmore graciously interrupted.

Hoping that he might bring the scene to a speedy termination, Zarin stepped forward and placed a hand upon the chairman's shoulder. The ex-janitor looked round and, releasing Elmore's hand, grasped that of Zarin.

"And you—" he faltered. "May I hope that you will not—will not judge us too harshly? And may I congratulate——"

"Pray do not distrub yourself in the least, my dear Mr. Chairman," Zarin broke in. "Surely no man can be blamed for this."

An hour later, Lieutenant Elmore, American Intelligence officer with the Anti-Bolshevik North Russian Expeditionary Forces, was seated in a first-class International compartment speeding toward Petrograd. Sitting beside him was Zarin, the outstanding master of the Russian secret service, now directing the Third Section of the newly organized Bolshevist Counter-espionage Department.

"Well, my dear Elmore," was Zarin's

first words, "how have you been since you left me so hurriedly in Petrograd?"

"My dear friend," Elmore replied, "if you think you are going to branch off the subject which we are now going to discuss, you are entirely mistaken. You know that I left Petrograd under orders which I could not disregard. But——"

"No! Let us finish one subject at a time," Zarin objected. "You were right in obeying your orders. You could not have done otherwise. But the fact is, I needed your help there. I need it now. You left Petrograd under orders of your superior officers in the United States army. You are returning to Petrograd under orders of your new chief, Zarin. According to your credentials, you are now Agent Number Twenty-eight of the Bolshevist Counter-espionage service. You cannot deny that. You dare not. You could not deny it an hour ago, and you cannot deny it now."

"I am at your—" Elmore began.

"Mercy," Zarin completed the sentence.

"I wanted to say that I am at your service," Elmore corrected.

"And likewise at my mercy," Zarin continued. "But I shall be merciful. I shall no doubt find it advisable soon to send you back to see what those terrible Americans are doing. Meanwhile, I shall arrange for you to send across the lines such communication as you may desire."

"Well, if you have finished, now give me an opportunity to speak," Elmore said. "In the first place, I want to thank you for having saved my life to-day."

"You saved your own life by doing what you were told to do," Zarin replied. "If you had spoken, all would have been lost."

"My dear friend," said Elmore, "*you* saved my life——"

"Oh, well, what if I did?" Zarin broke in impatiently. "Now I suppose you will ask me how I happened to appear upon the scene when I did. If it will satisfy your curiosity, I will tell you.

"After you left Petrograd, I was promoted to my present position because of certain little services I was able to render some of the Bolshevist leaders. I learned that you were attached to the Allied Intelligence Department in the north, and I went to Vologda for the express purpose of seeking to get into communication with you. Thought perhaps we might be of mutual service to each other.

"It was by merest accident that I stood on the station platform that morning when you arrived in Vologda, and I saw you as you limped across the plaza to enter the restaurant. You may be able to fool others, but you cannot fool me.

"When you left Vologda on the afternoon train, I was in the coach immediately behind yours. Thanks to the coldness of the car, I wore my coat, and had you, by chance, entered, I was prepared to hide my face behind my heavy kangaroo collar."

ELMORE had sat silently listening to his friend's remarkable explanation. When it was ended,

"Then you followed me back to Vologda, learned where I was imprisoned and arranged to send me your instructions and the paper?" he inquired.

In reply, Zarin explained his visit to Dr. Lukovsky.

"We have the doctor to thank for that," he concluded.

Seeing the perplexed look upon Elmore's face, Zarin continued:

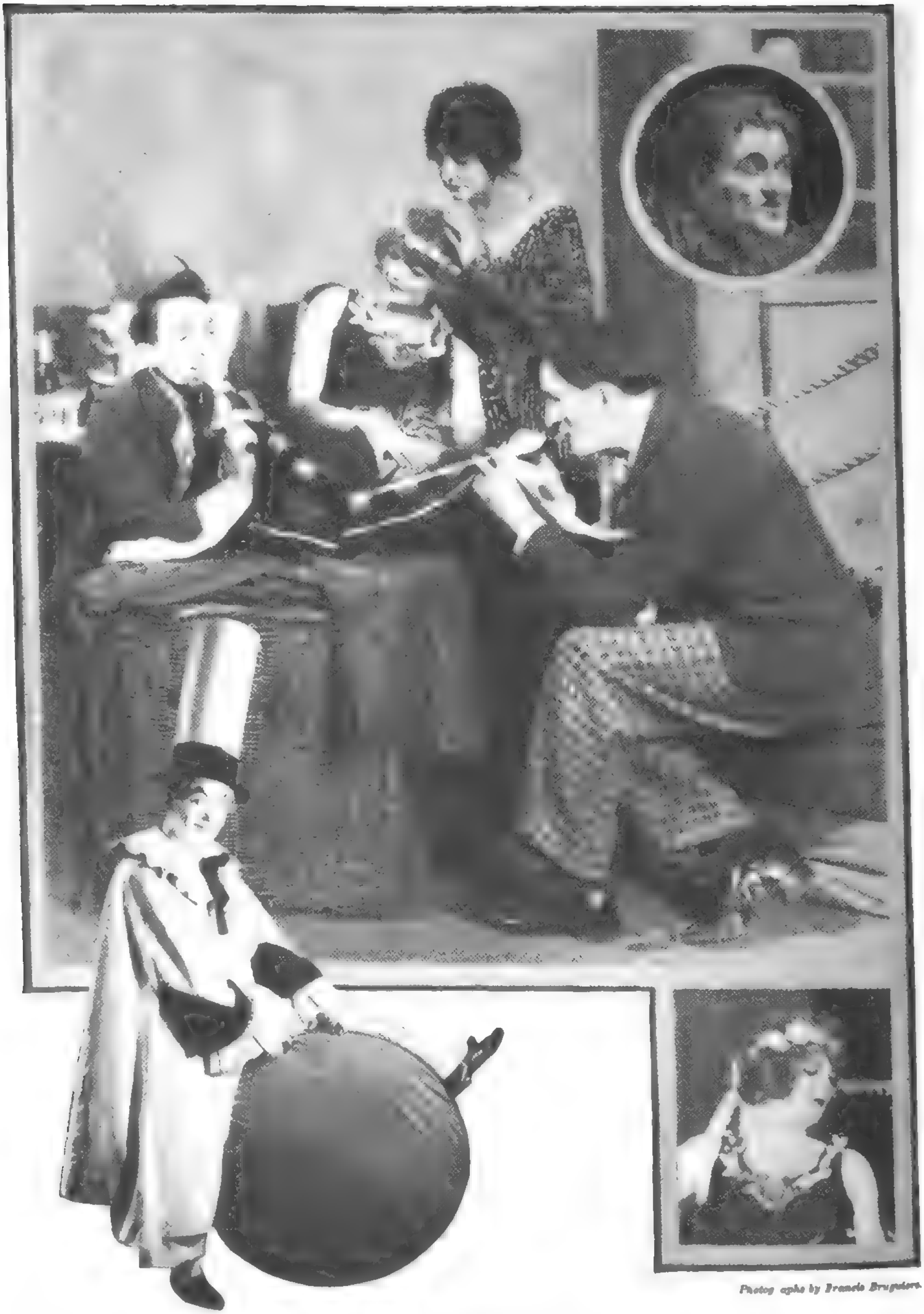
"No doubt you are wondering why it seemed necessary to resort to such an elaborate scheme. I reply that it appeared to me to be necessary. Of course, I could not have attempted to save you from the patrol. That would have been mere folly. When I returned to Vologda and found that you were in prison, it seemed to me best not to attempt to communicate with you personally. That might have roused suspicion in certain minds that we were hatching a conspiracy. One cannot be too careful now, when every man is under suspicion. Thanks to Dr. Lukovsky's influence, we were able to present a flawless defense, and—what is of greater import—we presented a dramatic defense. You know the Russian well enough to know that the most certain means of influencing him is resorting to dramatic effect."

Again Elmore sat in silence, offering no comment. Finally he turned about abruptly and said:

"There is just one further question I would like to ask. I know that I did not blow up that bridge. Who did blow it up?"

Zarin smiled very slightly.

"As I happened to be the only person left after you had been seized and taken away by the patrol, I imagine I must have done it," he replied.



Photographs by Francis Bruguiere.

The two musical clowns, *Polly* and *Tilly* (Philip Leigh and Edgar Stehli), entertain *Consuelo* (Margalo Gillmore) and *Zinida*, the lion-tamer (Helen Westley). Above, in circle, *He* (Richard Bennett). Below, *He* and *Consuelo*.

He Who Gets Slapped

A Remarkable Play from the Russian Which Has Been One of the New York Theatre Guild's Most Pronounced Artistic and Popular Successes

By Leonid Andreyev

Published by courtesy of the producers, The Theatre Guild, Inc.

ANDREYEV sets his stage in a circus as a symbol of the world, and there his men and women as clowns, jugglers, acrobats and bareback riders struggle against the combination of fate and accident which are the chief ingredients of life in his philosophy.

To this world of the circus in a city of France comes an unknown gentleman from "out there." He is not young and he is ugly, but there is something arresting in his rather strange face. His clothes and manner give an impression of wealth and leisure, and *"Papa" Briquet*, the manager of the circus, is very polite to him.

The stranger asks to become a member of the troupe, and they think at first that he is jesting or drunk, but when he persists they are sure that he must be a little mad. He wants to become a clown, and he grimaces and postures to show them how well he can do it. *Briquet* finally accepts him, for he wants no pay, and he chooses for his name *"He Who Gets Slapped,"* for that is to be his specialty.

He had left his world, hoping, in the life of the circus, to forget some of the blows that fate had dealt him. One could not associate with clowns, riders and jugglers the solemnities and the bitternesses of ordinary existence. But here he found the same elements—love, hate, jealousy, sham, poverty.

Zinida, whom *Briquet* loves, loves *Alfred Bezano*, the bareback rider, and *Bezano* loves *Consuelo*, his partner, the *Equestrian Tango Queen.*

Consuelo is the daughter of *Count Mancini*, a bounder who keeps up an appearance of sorts on his daughter's earnings. She is lovely, hardly more than a child, and the darling of the circus household. *Mancini* is trying to arrange a marriage for her with *Baron Regnard*, a gross roué, past middle age. Marriage was not the original intention of the baron, but the count is playing carefully to achieve his purpose.

Love is a new emotion to the baron. "Why do I love you so much, Consuelo?" he asks, one day. "I have had a hundred women, beauties, but I didn't see them. You are the first, and I don't see any one else." But still he holds out against marrying her.

He looks on with distress at this game of *Mancini's*. One day, he protests to the count, and begs him to give *Consuelo* to *Bezano* or—half-jesting, fearing to be laughed at—to him.

But *Mancini* makes clear to *He* that *Consuelo's* marriage is for his betterment, not for hers. He also lets out the fact that she is not his own daughter.

He loves her so much that, knowing the hopelessness of it, he goes to *Bezano* and pleads with him to save her from the baron.

HE: Listen. It is painful for me to pronounce these words. She loves you. Save her from this spider! Or are you blind, and don't see the web, which is woven in every dark corner? Get out of the vicious circle in which you are turning round like a blind man. Take her away; steal her; do what you want. Kill her, even, and take her to heaven or to the devil. But don't give her to this man! He is a defiler of love. And if you are timid, if you are afraid to lift your hand against her—kill the baron! Kill!

Bezano (*with a smile*): And who will kill the others to come?

He: She loves you.

Bezano: Did she tell you that herself?

He: What a petty, what a stupid, what a human pride! But you are a little god. A god—Youth! Why don't you want to believe me? Look in my eyes! Do such eyes lie? Yes; my face is ugly. I make faces and grimaces. I am surrounded by laughter; but don't you see the god behind all this, a god like you? Look—look at me!

Later, *He* finds *Consuelo* alone, brooding over the strange behavior of *Zinida*, who has frightened them all to-night by her hardihood with the lions.

Consuelo: Is that you, He dear? It's all so sad here to-day. He, are you sorry for Zinida?

He: What did she do?

Consuelo: I didn't see. I had closed my eyes and didn't open them. Alfred says she is a wicked woman, but that isn't true. She has such nice eyes, and what tiny cold hands—as if she were dead. What does she do it for? Alfred says she should be audacious, beautiful, but quiet; otherwise, what she does is only disgusting. It isn't true, is it, He?

He: She loves Alfred.

Consuelo: Alfred? My Bezano! How does she love him? The same as every one else loves?

He: Yes; as every one loves—or still more.

Consuelo: Bezano! Bezano! No; it's nonsense!

A long silence; then:

He: How beautiful you are, Consuelo! If the baron asks you to be his wife, will you accept?

Consuelo: Certainly, He. That's all father and I are waiting for. Father told me yesterday that the baron will not hesitate very long. Of course I do not love him, but I will be his honest, faithful wife.

He: Are those your own words—"his honest and faithful wife"?

Consuelo: Certainly they are mine! Whose could they be? He loves me so much, the poor thing! Dear He, what does "love" mean? Everybody speaks of love—love—Zinida, too. Poor Zinida! What a boring evening this has been! He, did you paint the laughter on your face yourself?

He: My own self, dear little Consuelo.

Consuelo: How do you do it, all of you? I tried once, but couldn't do a thing. Why are there no women clowns? Why are you so silent, He? You, too, are sad to-night.

He: No; I am happy to-night. Give me your hand, Consuelo; I want to see what it says.

Consuelo: Do you know how? What a talented man you are! Read it; but don't lie, like a Gipsy. (*He takes her hand.*) Am I lucky?

He: Yes—lucky. But wait a minute—this line here—funny! Ah, Consuelo, what does it say, here? (*Acting.*) I tremble—my eyes do not dare to read the strange, fatal signs. Consuelo——

Consuelo: The stars are talking.

He: Yes; the stars are talking. Their voices are distant and terrible; their rays are pale and their shadows slip by, like the ghosts of dead virgins. Their spell is upon you, Consuelo—beautiful Consuelo! You stand at the door of eternity.

Consuelo: You see, He, you did tell me a lie, just like a Gipsy.

He: But it is written here, silly, and here. Now think of what the stars are saying. Here you have eternal life, love and glory, and here—listen to what Jupiter says. He says, "Goddess, you must not belong to any one born on earth," and if you marry the baron, you'll perish—you'll die, Consuelo!

Consuelo (*laughing*): Will he eat me?

He: Don't laugh, Consuelo, at the voice of the stars. They are far away; their rays are light and pale, and we can barely see their sleeping shadows, but their sorcery is stern and dark. You stand at the gates of eternity. Your die is cast; you are doomed—and your Alfred, whom you love in your heart, even though your mind is not aware of it, your Alfred cannot save you. He, too, is a stranger on this earth. He is submerged in a deep, strange sleep. He, too, is a little god who has lost himself, and, Consuelo, never, never will he find his way to heaven again. Forget Bezano——

Consuelo: I don't understand a word. Do the gods really exist? My teacher told me about them. But I thought it was all tales. (*Laughs.*) And my Bezano is a god?

He: Forget Bezano! Consuelo, do you

know who can save you—the only one who can save you? I——

CONSUELO (*laughing*): You, He?

HE: Yes; but don't laugh. Look! Here is the letter "H." It is I, He.

CONSUELO: He Who Gets Slapped? Is that written here, too?

HE: That, too. The stars know everything. But look here—what more is written about him. Consuelo, welcome him. He is an old god in disguise, who came down on earth only to love you, foolish little Consuelo!

CONSUELO (*laughing and humming*): Some god!

HE: Don't mock! The gods don't like such empty laughter from beautiful lips. The gods grow lonely and die when they are not recognized. Oh, Consuelo! Oh, great joy and love! Do recognize this god and accept him. Think a moment—one day a god suddenly went crazy.

CONSUELO: Gods go crazy, too?

HE: Yes; when they are half man, they often go mad. Suddenly he saw his own sublimity and shuddered with horror, with infinite solitude, with superhuman anguish. It is terrible when anguish touches the divine soul!

CONSUELO: I don't like it. What language are you speaking? I don't understand——

HE: I speak the language of your awakening. Consuelo, recognize and accept the god who was thrown down from the summit, like a stone. Accept the god who fell to the earth in order to live, to play and to be infinitely drunk with joy. Goddess!

CONSUELO (*tortured*): He—I cannot understand. Let my hand alone.

HE (*stands up*): Sleep—then wake again, Consuelo! And when you wake—remember that hour when, covered with snow-white sea-foam, you did emerge from the sky-blue waters. Remember heaven, and the slow eastern wind, and the whisper of the foam at your marble feet.

CONSUELO (*her eyes are closed*): I believe—Wait! I remember. Remind me further——

He is bowed over *Consuelo*, with lifted arms. He speaks slowly, but in a commanding voice, as if conjuring.

HE: You see the waves playing. Remember the song of the sirens, their sorrowless song of joy, their white bodies shining blue through the blue waters. Or can you hear the sun singing? Like the strings of a divine harp spread the gold rays. Do you not see the hand of God, which gives harmony, light and love to the world? Do not mountains, in the blue cloud of incense, sing their hymn of glory? Remember, Consuelo; remember the prayer of the mountains, the prayer of the sea. (*Commandingly.*) Remember—Consuelo!

CONSUELO (*opening her eyes*): No! He, I was feeling so happy, and suddenly I forgot it all. Yet something of it all is still in my heart. Help me again, He; remind me! It hurts—I hear so many voices. They all sing: "Consuelo! Consuelo!" What comes after? What comes after? It hurts. Remind me, He. (*Silence. In the ring the music suddenly bursts forth in a tempestuous circus gallop.*) He (*opens her eyes and smiles*), that's Alfred galloping. Do you recognize his music?

HE (*with rage*): Leave the boy alone! (*Suddenly falls on his knees before Consuelo.*) I love you, Consuelo—revelation of my heart, light of my nights! I love you, Consuelo! (*Looks at her in ecstasy and tears. She slaps him.*) What's this?

CONSUELO: A slap. You forget who you are. (*Stands up, with anger in her eyes.*) You are He Who Gets Slapped. Did you forget it? Some god! With such a face—slapped face. Was it with slaps they threw you down from heaven, God?

HE: Wait! Don't stand up. I—did not finish the play.

CONSUELO: You lied to me. Why did you play so that I believed you?

HE: I am He Who Gets Slapped.

CONSUELO: You are not angry because I struck you? I did not want to, really, but you were so—disgusting. And now you are so funny again. You have great talent, He, or are you drunk?

HE: Didn't you understand that you were a queen, and I a fool who is in love with his queen? Don't you know, Consuelo, that every queen has a fool, and he is always in love with her, and they always beat him for it—He Who Gets Slapped.

CONSUELO: No; I didn't know.

HE: Yes; every queen. Beauty has her fool. Wisdom, too. Oh, how many fools she has! Her court is overcrowded with enamored fools, and the sound of slaps does not cease, even through the night. But I never received such a sweet slap as the one given by my little queen.

Everybody's Magazine, December, 1922

The count at last succeeds in bringing about the marriage of *Consuelo* to the baron. He even wrings from *Briquet* a benefit performance for *Consuelo*.

Consuelo accepts her approaching marriage very evenly. She has always been accustomed to having her life arranged for her by *Mancini*, and it does not occur to her to question him now. She is pleased as a child with a bright toy at the idea of wealth. But sad, too, at leaving her friends.

Always behind her quick laughter, her irrelevancy and her childish naïveté there is a wistfulness touched with tragedy.

He finds her resting from the rehearsal for her benefit.

HE: Consuelo, are you going to marry the baron?

CONSUELO (*indifferently*): It seems so.

HE: And do you remember my prediction? That if you marry the baron, you——

CONSUELO: Oh, that's what you were talking about. But you were making fun.

HE: Nobody can tell, my queen. Sometimes one makes fun, and suddenly it turns out to be true. The stars never talk in vain. No, my dear girl; were I in your place, I would think it over. And suppose suddenly you should die? Don't marry the baron, Consuelo!

CONSUELO: And what is—death?

HE: I don't know, my queen. Nobody knows. Like love—nobody knows. But your little hands will become cold, and your dear little eyes will close forever. You will be away from here. And the music will play without you, and without you the crazy Bezano will be galloping, and Tilly and Polly will be playing on their pipes without you — tilly-polly, tilly-polly — tilly-polly, tilly-polly.

CONSUELO: Please don't, He darling! I am so sad, anyway—tilly-polly, tilly-polly.

HE: You were crying, my little Consuelo. Why?

CONSUELO: Ah, I don't know. There is something here. (*Pressing her hand against her heart.*) I don't know.

HE: It is the charm of the far-off stars, Consuelo. It is the voice of your fate, my little queen!

ON THE day of the benefit there is a great celebration in the common room of the circus family, with champagne, toasts, flowers and speechmaking.

Consuelo seems to enjoy it until the baron tries to dance with her. The touch of his hand on her arm repels and frightens her, and she cries out and pushes him away.

CONSUELO (*to He*): He is so terrible! Did you see how he pressed my arm? I wanted to scream. (*With tears in her eyes.*) He hurt me.

HE: It's not too late yet. Refuse him.

CONSUELO: It is too late, He. Don't talk about it.

HE: Do you want it? I will take you away from here.

CONSUELO: Where to? (*Laughs.*) Ah, my dear little silly boy, where could you take me to? All right—be quiet. How pale you are! You, too, love me? Don't, He; please don't! Why do they all love me?

HE: Because you are so beautiful.

CONSUELO: No, no! It's not true. They must not love me. I was still a little cheerful, but when they began to speak—so nicely and to bid farewell as if I were dying, I thought I should begin to cry. Don't talk; don't talk—but drink to—my happiness. (*With a sad smile.*) To my happiness, He! What are you doing?

HE: I am throwing away the glass from which you drank with the others. I shall give you another one. Wait a minute. (*He goes to pour the champagne, returning shortly.*) Here is your glass. To your happiness—to your freedom, Consuelo!

CONSUELO: And where is yours? We must touch glasses.

HE: You leave half.

CONSUELO: Must I drink so much? He dearie, I shall become drunk. I still have to ride.

HE: No; you will not be drunk. Dear little girl, did you forget that I am your magician? Be quiet and drink. I charmed the wine. My witchery is in it. Drink, Goddess!

CONSUELO (*lingeringly*): What kind eyes you have! But why are you so pale?

HE: Because I love you. Look at my kind eyes and drink; give yourself up to my charm, Goddess! You shall fall asleep, and wake again, as before. Do you remember? And you shall see your country, your sky.

CONSUELO (*bringing the glass to her lips*): I shall see all this; is that true? (*Drinking.*) There! Look! Just a half. Take it. But what is the matter with you? Are you laughing or crying?

Photographs by Francis Bruguiere.

Consuelo, the *Equestrian Tango Queen* (Margalo Gillmore), and *Baron Regnard* (Louis Calvert), the dissolute roué with whom her father finally arranges a marriage. Above, in circles, *He* (Richard Bennett) at the moment of death, and *Count Mancini* (Frank Reicher), *Consuelo's* reputed father.

He: I am laughing and crying.

Mancini (*pushing him away*): Enough, Countess! My patience is exhausted. Will you step aside, sir?

Consuelo: I am tired.

Mancini: You are not too tired to chatter and drink wine with a clown, and when your duty calls you— Briquet! Tell them to ring the bell. It is time.

Consuelo: I am tired, father.

Zinida: Count, it is cruel. Don't you see how pale she has become?

Baron: What is the matter with you, dear little Consuelo?

Consuelo: Nothing.

Zinida: She simply needs a rest, Baron. She hasn't sat down yet—and so much excitement! Sit down here, dear child. Cover yourself and rest a little. Men are so cruel.

Consuelo (*looking before her with wide-open eyes, as if she were listening to something within herself*): Ah! I feel pain. Here at my heart. Father, what is it? I am afraid. What is it? My feet, too. I can't stand— (*Falls on divan, her eyes wide open.*)

Mancini (*running about*): Bring a doctor! Heavens! It is terrible!

Briquet: Bring a doctor!

He: It is death, Consuelo, my little queen. I killed you. You are dying. (*He cries loudly and bitterly.*)

Consuelo, with a scream, closes her eyes and becomes silent and quiet. All are in terrible agitation. The baron is motionless, and sees only *Consuelo*.

Mancini (*furious*): You are lying, rascal! Damned clown! What did you give her? You poisoned her! Murderer! Bring a doctor!

He: A doctor will not help. You are dying, my little queen. Consuelo! Consuelo!

Consuelo (*in a dull and distant voice*): You are joking, He. Don't frighten me. I am so frightened. Is that death? I don't want it. Ah, He, my darling He, tell me that you are joking! I am afraid, my dear, golden He.

He: Yes; I am joking. Don't you hear how I laugh, Consuelo? They all laugh at you here, my silly child. Sleep, my dear; sleep, my heart; sleep, my love!

Consuelo: Yes; I have no more pain. Why did you joke that way and frighten me? Now I laugh at myself. You told me—didn't you?—that I—should—live—eternally——

He: Yes, Consuelo; you shall live eternally. Sleep. Be calm. (*Lifts up his arm as if straining with all his forces to lift her soul higher.*) How easy it is now! How much light, how many lights are burning about you! The light is blinding you.

Consuelo: Yes—light. Is that the ring?

He: No; it is the sea and the sun—what a sun! Don't you feel that you are the foam, white sea-foam, and you are flying to the sun? You feel light; you have no body; you are flying higher, my love!

Consuelo: I am flying. I am the sea-foam, and this is the sun. It shines—so strong. I feel well. (*She dies.*)

He has drunk the other half of the poisoned glass, and in the confusion following *Consuelo's* death, his growing stupor is not noticed at once.

Jackson (*the chief clown—clasping his hands*): Then it is all true? Poisoned! What a vile man you are, He! Is this the way to play? Now wait for the last slap of the executioner!

Zinida: Leave his soul alone, Jim. He was a man, and he loved. Happy Consuelo!

A shot is heard in the corridor. Thomas, the strong man, frightened, runs in and points to his head.

Thomas: Baron—baron—his head! He shot himself——

Briquet (*throwing his arms up*): God! What a calamity for our circus!

Mancini: The baron? The baron? No! What are you standing here for? Ah!

Briquet: Be calm, Count. Who would have believed it? Such a respectable gentleman!

He (*lifting his head with difficulty*): What more? What happened?

Thomas: The baron shot himself. Honestly. Straight here! He's lying out yonder.

He (*stands up, lifted to his feet by the last gleam of consciousness and life, speaks strongly and indignantly*): And you loved her so much, Baron! So much! My Consuelo! And you want to be ahead of me even there? No! I am coming. We shall prove then whose she is to be forever— (*He catches at his throat and falls dead. People run to him. General agitation.*)

Next month's play will be a new American comedy by Hubert Osborne, entitled, "Shore Leave." See January Everybody's—out December 15th.

A Novelette Complete in This Issue

Life, Liberty *and—*

Did You Ever Watch a Youngster in His Struggles Up from the Gutter? Laugh with Him, Cry with Him, Wonder Why Our Chances Are Not More Nearly Equal?

By Wyndham Martyn

Illustration by L. F. Wilford

"JERSEY" PIKE furnished, perhaps, the solitary instance of an obscure pugilist attaining notoriety as the subject of a large cartoon on the sporting-page of a great metropolitan evening paper. Certainly he is the only preliminary fighter whose unfortunate remark was one of those catch-phrases bandied from mouth to mouth until it dies a natural death.

The cartoonist who sketched Jersey Pike rarely attended any but the main bout. That he came early to the fight club on this occasion was to get a line on "Red" McSorley, who had been declared by a rival paper to be the pick of the poor middleweight division. In itself, the fight had few unusual features. McSorley, in excellent physical condition, outweighed his opponent by fifteen pounds. The cartoonist had little sympathy with Jersey Pike on this account. He conceived him to be of that cigarette-smoking class of poolroom habitués which lasts its brief season and is forgotten.

Jersey Pike was suffering from other handicaps than condition. He was fighting a West Side boy in the latter's own bailiwick, and the crowd was against him. Topographically, Pike was from New Jersey, that fair western neighbor to which New York has never rendered its just due. New Jersey's representative was knocked out in the fourth round. Only his gameness kept him on his feet so long. When the first asteroidal splendors had been dimmed, Pike supposed himself to be reclining on his humble couch, listening to the tolling of the inexorable clock. On this sad evening it did not stop when it had sounded five strokes. Remorselessly it went on until ten had been struck. Voices were mingled with it. No doubt Jersey's patient mother and her irascible spouse united in their disapproval of this long slumber.

"Gee!" cried Pike in a loud wail. "I must 'ave overslep'." Then he turned agonized eyes toward the grinning faces at the ringside and understood what had happened.

On the Edgewater Ferry he tried to avoid the notice of two of the club's regular patrons. They had seen him fight a dozen times and saw him creep up the stairway to escape them.

"That boy's yellow," he heard one of them declare.

"Yellow nothing!" answered Svenson hotly. He did not forget that he had just won ten dollars from his companion, who predicted Pike would not stay three rounds. "He knew damn well McSorley was too rugged for him, but he didn't run out of the fight. He's not yellow."

"He's a money-hound," jeered the other. "Why, that gink would let Dempsey take fifty cracks at him for a dollar a shot. That boy's been beat up something fierce this year. He don't smoke and he don't drink, but that ain't goin' to help him. I tell you, Svenson, it's being beat up bad what puts 'em in the discard. It's the clever boys like Benny Leonard that stay in the game. Pike's through. He overslep' once too often."

Mr. Michael Walsh, as became one who had spent twenty-five years patrolling New York's pavements, knew something about fighters. In some particulars, he was right in his estimation of Jersey Pike. Pike had been badly punished of late and, too, he did not fight for pleasure but for profit. There is a lordly phrase which was once the pet of the Superior Sociologist, but is now carelessly hurled from one soap-box to another—"economic determinism"—which comprehends the situation. Economic determinism sent Jersey Pike into the ring at the age of seventeen.

The causes were somewhat obscure and have to do mainly with an unfortunate fishing-excursion undertaken by Mr. Pike, senior, in company with other amateurs of the rod. The elder Pike was the home tyrant at his worst. He believed that the whip was childhood's destined corrective. He deprecated the newer freedom for woman, and cherished illusions concerning his ability to pick out the fastest horse in a race. Mr. Pike was, in fine, the male unabashed. There accompanied Mr. Pike and his angling cronies a stone jar of aged Bourbon. This was in a day when such seductions might be purchased openly and without fear. But Mr. Pike had not purchased the Bourbon; he had borrowed it. It was his contribution to the entertainment; but you must note that it was borrowed. Otherwise, you may derive a wrong idea of that code of honesty which was another of his illusions. Mr. Pike had borrowed it from an august person who employed him as night watchman. This august person had no idea that his vaults had been robbed. It was not his watchman's intention that he should.

The thing was perfectly simple in Mr. Pike's mind. Swell Sally was running that day at New Orleans. She was an "in-and-outer," and only the expert could comprehend when she was in or when she was out. Mr. Pike considered himself such a one. He had backed Swell Sally at ten to one with a ten-dollar bill his wife was, very foolishly, about to expend on shoes for her offspring. With the hundred dollars, Mr. Pike would buy another gallon of Bourbon, return his wife a part of her hoardings, and by skilful turf investments go on to fame and fortune. He would, of course, throw up his job and tell his employer what he thought of him before all the other employees. He had rehearsed his stinging epithets many times. He hated his employer. He cherished hard thoughts concerning a wealthy man who would so demean himself as to come creeping stealthily upon a night watchman who slumbered.

A wise man said, thousands of years since, "The horse is a vain thing for safety." So far as depending upon any particular horse to win a race, there seems no need to revise the psalmist. It stands.

WHEN Mr. Pike and his companions came to the fishing-banks in the launch, they found the fish sluggish and disdainful of erratically flung bait. Presently they tired of the slow sport. By high noon the borrowed Bourbon was consumed. Mr. Pike found his standing among his fellows high. He heard such uncommon encomiums that he offered loudly to borrow another gallon.

His offer was enthusiastically accepted and an adjournment proposed. A life on the ocean wave had already disagreed with three anglers, and it was decided to take the unsteady launch to Pier 15-A, North River, where a brother of one of them kept guard by day and had a little shack.

Pike's employer had his place of business near Battery Park. The liquor was cached in a cellar, the key of which he had fortunately found. To this cache Pike took his unsteady way. The janitor, resenting his daytime presence, followed him and discovered him actually with the goods. Enraged at detection, Mr. Pike dropped the match he had in his hand. And while he chastised the intruder, the fire spread.

Three events happened almost at the same moment.

Swell Sally's rider was disqualified and the race awarded to the second horse. Mr. Pike's companions were ejected from Pier 15-A by the dock superintendent for unseemly behavior. Mr. Pike was brought before his employer. The event sobered even him.

"Pike," said the boss sternly, "you have destroyed five hundred dollars' worth of old Bourbon and might have fired the whole building. You are, and always have been, an inefficient and worthless employee. I hereby discharge you. And as I am none of your fool sentimentalists, I shall turn you over to the police and press the charge."

"Give me a chance!" Mr. Pike pleaded. "I'll pay it back every cent."

The boss laughed.

"How?" he demanded. "Out of your earnings? I guess not."

Pike did some rapid thinking. In that bitter moment he realized that Swell Sally, galloped she never so fleetly, would not pay for the damage he had done. Admirer though he was, he had yet to admit she was an in-and-outer. But all hope had not fled. There were those bound to him by the holy ties of consanguinity who could aid him.

His eldest boy, Gerrard, named after a former employer who failed to appreciate the honor by advancing Pike's wage, was in a postion to earn money. Pike had been too lenient with him. Except for his school-work, cutting the lawns of those more affluent villagers who lived on the terrace and running a paper-route, Gerrard—corrupted to "Jersey"—did nothing. And his wife, that patient and uncomplaining woman—was there not work for her to do? Pike decided that washing for others should be her contribution.

"Boss," he cried earnestly, "if you have me sent to the Island, you won't get a cent! Me—I'm proud; I'd die of disgrace. If you let me stay on here and take ten dollars a week off my wages, I'd pay it off inside a year."

"How would you and your family live?"

Pike made a gesture of noble dignity. He sought to imply that he would take his punishment like a man. He would deny himself needed sustenance. He would neither eat, drink nor smoke. Tears came.

"Think of the missus and the kids!" he entreated.

"I am," the other told him. "If you were a single man, I'd see you hanged before I'd let up."

In the end, Pike won his point. He put the matter before his family.

"You're through school," he told Pike, junior. "No good you keeping on. Nothing above the collar. I've seen Schuster. You start in Monday, and if you don't make good, I'll wale you so good and plenty you won't never need another lesson." He turned to his wife. "I seen Mrs. Hammond getting off the trolley and said you had time to do some washing. She's tickled to death. Jersey's to fetch it for you."

The Mr. Pike who delivered this ultimatum was not the cringing man who had whined for mercy a few hours earlier. Mr. Pike at home bowed his head to none. He was ready of tongue and fist, an uncertain friend, and amiable only to such as held his opinions. He did not take his family wholly into his confidence. He spoke, vaguely, of having been the victim of a conspiracy, but frowned upon his wife's timid desire to know exactly why his salary had been cut in half.

IN ORDER to hold his job, Jersey had to fight. The village was bisected by trolley lines. The community to the east hated that which dwelt to the west. On his occasional excursions to the alien zone, Jersey had escaped damage by his amazing speediness. But Schuster, the grocer, had his store in the very heart of the enemy country. No sprinting could save him now. Pike realized the situation fully. But for the mother, who was almost always in pain, he would have run away.

Jersey, once committed to a line of conduct, went at it thoroughly. He learned to fight. In six months not a lad in the village dared taunt him. And, what was more to his advantage, that eminent plasterer, Knut Svenson, had seen him in action and recommended him enthusiastically to the manager of the fight club he frequented. Thus it was that Mr. Pike's indiscretion led his heir logically to what sporting scribes have termed "the realm of the padded mitt."

Mrs. Pike hardly lived up to her contract. Her husband had no idea that for years her health had been poor. When she died—to her husband's intense surprise—he felt she had taken an unworthy advantage of him. The whole household was disorganized. Who, Mr. Pike demanded fretfully, who would cook for him now? A few meals at Joe's Eating House demonstrated with what economy the poor woman had prepared his dinners. Mr. Pike began to use the phrase: "Before your mother left me" as one might whose better half had run away with another man.

It was not until Mr. Pike wed again that Jersey rebelled. Mr. Pike was doing fairly well. His debt had long since been paid. He wore such an air of rectitude at his work that the boss could not bear to look upon his face. His manner was that of one who shared a horrid secret with an employer. Jersey was contributing fifteen dollars a week to the exchequer. The stepmother, deceived somewhat by Mr. Pike's appearance and conversation, assumed him to be well able to support her in the comforts to which she had not been used. So long as Jersey was working, Mr. Pike felt no uneasiness. But early one Sunday morning, Jersey deserted the nest. It chanced that his father had gone down for the paper, to whose comic section he was much attached, and met his heir. In the boy's hand was a suitcase; on his head the domestic Panama which foretold a journey. Mr. Pike's voice shook with emotion as he saw how nearly fifteen dollars a week had escaped.

Mr. Pike wasted no time in asking questions. He clenched his mighty hand and aimed at Jersey's jaw. Among strong, slow-moving men of his kind, he was not without a certain fistic distinction. But he was now opposed to a lad as tall as he and trained in a cleverer school. Jersey merely moved his head slightly to avoid the blow. He neither removed the domestic Panama nor set down his grip. At first, his father supposed this to be an accident. When he was convinced it was design, the studied insult of the thing appalled him.

Round the fence, the neighbors, roused by his oaths, began to gather. Old Mother Gallagher enjoyed the spectacle immensely. She had never forgiven Mr. Pike for slaying her night-singing cat. Loud were her criticisms as to Mr. Pike's face, figure, post-mortem destination and ability as a pugilist. For the first time in his life, Jersey had a wholly friendly crowd with him. In vain he sought to placate his father. Presently he saw it was not possible. Calmly and thoroughly young Pike set about making his escape possible.

"Get up, dad," he said, when he had knocked the bully down thrice. "You forced it on me."

The prone man suddenly scrambled to his feet and rushed indoors. Old Mother Gallagher remembered the fate of her cat.

"He's gone for his gun!" she shouted. "Beat it, boy!"

When Mr. Pike reappeared, brandishing a revolver, there was nothing vile in the form of human life to meet his eye. And to his loudly hurled challenges to slay any who harbored his son, only the Sabbath calm opposed itself. Mr. Pike did not realize how near he had been to the electric chair.

HARLEM and its fight clubs knew Jersey Pike no more. He had one fight at Brown's Gymnasium and beat his opponent handily. With the price of victory, he replenished the wardrobe he had left behind him in his flight and took train to Philadelphia. Here an enthusiastic promoter dubbed him the middleweight champion of New Jersey. Perhaps he was. But he found he could rarely get a match unless he conceded weight.

Finally, Jersey achieved a manager. This one arranged a tour for his client. It was a severe one. There is a class of fighter who is always given a decision in his home town. If he is knocked out, a foul is claimed. It was this sort of fighter Jersey was called upon to meet. And it was this sort of community patriotism which robbed him of victory and lowered his status. It was on this tour that dyspepsia seized him. Finally, the manager dropped him. Being of a simple and confiding nature, not given to suspicion, he became the prey of charlatans who promised to cure his dyspeptic ills. He suffered many things from them. They took his money and left him bankrupt of hope.

It was in a Baltimore hospital that he learned that his left apex showed a tendency to hardening. When he found that this was a threat of the "con," the physician who was talking bade him take heart.

"Go to Arizona," he advised. "You don't need medicine. You need open air. Keep away from crowded areas."

A few friends saw him off and presented him with a few needed dollars.

His Odyssey is not the subject of this

story. In its essential points, it differs little from those of other adventurers who have ridden the rods, trodden the ties and beaten their way toward the wider country. He conceived an aversion for his former profession. He blamed it for the lamentable condition of health in which he found himself. He never offered a remark when those about him chattered of fighters and fighting. And, rather than put up his fists, he accepted insults. Only the quest of health interested him. And when he talked, it would be to ask wistful questions of Arizona and whether it was not true that a guy living there would get strong and find honest labor plentiful. Jersey had ample leisure to think about his future. Work always figured in it. He wanted a home; he had always wanted the simpler, less complex comforts. Out in Arizona none would know he had been a fighter. Perhaps some day he would own a great ranch, ride on a horse and have splendid children about him.

He had been a month on his way when he was compelled to drop the rôle of pacifist. He was riding the rods of a long, disheartened freight train in company with many professional wanderers. As it reached the top of a long grade, it stopped suddenly. Armed deputies surrounded it, and those hoboes who did not surrender themselves readily were clubbed. Jersey was amazed to find himself among the few not treated with violence. He did not look dangerous. The deputy who hauled him out found his quarry the subject for jest. Jersey was an inch under six feet and weighed one hundred and thirty pounds. Long unshaven, he had not yet acquired the dignity of a beard. He stood there, his great hands depending from skinny arms helplessly. In his agonized eyes was the fear that in some penitentiary he might die. To the deputy, Jersey was merely one who was trying to look like a hard-luck story.

"Please let me go, boss," Jersey pleaded, "I gotta get down to Arizona. The doctor said so."

"Well, well, well!" drawled the deputy. "You gotta go to Arizoney. Sure you can go." But the deputy's cruel grip had him by the forearm. "There's one little preliminary first. You've got to show me you're a better man than me."

"You mean," said Jersey, "that if I lick you I can go, and if you lick me I gotta stop with this bunch?"

"That's the ticket," said the deputy.

By this time the hoboes were handcuffed and the other deputies free to listen. Only one man voiced his disapproval.

"I ain't askin' him ter fight," said the deputy. "I'm too big for him. I know that. I'd kill him in five minutes." He paused a moment and looked at Jersey. "Say, what the hell's biting you?" Jersey was taking off his dust-laden coat.

Jersey, now that he was forced to resume his old profession, was not one to waste words. He did not even mean to be insulting when he demanded,

"You ain't going to run out of it, boss?"

He looked at his opponent with level eyes and a heart undismayed. He had weight, height and condition against him. If the fight went two rounds, Jersey would lose, because he was weak. He must win before the first round had gone half its length. He had strength enough, combined with the professional advantage of knowing how to hit, for his purpose.

The deputy began with a well-advertised swing. Jersey moved languidly from the sweeping arc, and as the bigger man set himself for another blow, he delivered with all his strength a right-hander on the jaw. Two hundred pounds of deputy came crashing to the ground. Nonchalantly, Jersey waited. The tremendous applause of his late traveling companions did not concern him. It was the frown of the deputies which alarmed him. They loudly declared that he had won by a lucky punch and that the fight must continue.

But the deputy who had lost thought otherwise. He had enough sense to see he had run up against a better man. His reputation would suffer less if he allowed the lucky-punch theory to be held.

"Don't never let me catch you again," he warned Jersey. "If you ain't out of sight in one minute, I'll plug you. Git!"

The applauding hoboes had reason to regret their partizan attitude. If Jersey had won freedom for himself, he had done so at the expense of their comfort.

ARIZONA does not always present a friendly face to such visitors as Jersey. There was a monotony about the landscape that made him long for Coytesville and her charms. The vastness of the country appalled him. He had always imagined his native state to be a large one. In Bisbee he met a native son, swollen with state pride, who informed him one so minded, and gifted, could take fifteen New Jerseys and superimpose them upon Arizona and have more than enough left for Rhode Island. Pike might have replied that Newark houses two people for every one that Arizona possesses, but he was not apt at statistics.

He did not stay long in Bisbee. He remembered the warning to keep far from crowded areas. It became almost an obsession to remain in the vast spaces. He almost starved in trying to do so. The ranch-lands and the desert claimed him. The rancher does not like tramps. Jersey found he had no economic value in the eyes of such men. He knew nothing of cattle, and confessed that he had never been on a horse.

For a long time he kept from the mountains. There was something about their austerity and isolation which frightened him. And he had but vague ideas about the fauna of the country. He called to mind the grizzlies in the Bronx zoo with their small, cruel eyes and fearful claws.

Jersey's decision to brave the mountains came after a series of such rebuffs as well might have broken his heart. The need of food drove him to the dog-guarded ranch-houses. When he had been bitten a few times, he appeared at the rearmost and least imposing entrance and asked for food in exchange for work. He usually was given a meal. But whenever the cow-punchers were around, he paid for it by contributing to their merriment. To them he appeared as a figure of fun. There are certain definite ways in which man differs from the wolf. Alone, the wolf is cowardly; in packs, he has a desperate audacity. Alone, man can be gentle, humane and friendly. In crowds, he may be cruel, and given to harsh pranks.

It was Jersey's misfortune most often to meet man in pack-formation. They practised their skill with the rope on him. They made mock of him and set him on outlaw horses. They conceived him to be a professional hobo—the sort of man who knocks the ashes of his pipe among straw-filled barns and has no regret if stock is destroyed by such carelessness. Jersey's appearance was against him. He was thin to emaciation. His hair was long, and there was now a sparse beard. It was after a very cruel reception that Jersey decided to cross the mountain range and try to find a kinder people.

It was near sunset when Jersey ascended to such an eminence and saw, spread out before him, a distant town and the welcome signs of men who did not ranch, who did not employ horsemen with tormenting lariats.

"They won't let a guy croak," Jersey assured himself. "They won't let a guy starve."

It was dark when he reached the town. There was a silence about it that depressed him. Then he made the discovery that it was a deserted town. Human life there was none. He had come upon what had been a mining town. The brief prosperity had gone and its inhabitants moved on to another center. It was as though a mirage had seduced him to a happier way of thinking and was now disappearing in darkness and mockery.

Jersey reached out his thin arms as though in entreaty. Words would not come. Here it was destined for him to die. He knew in this dreadful moment of disappointment that his strength was gone. He had come to the end of his patient frame's endurance. He found he was tottering. Then he pitched forward and fell face downward. It was another knock-out in his record.

JERSEY had never occupied such a room as that in which he woke again to consciousness. He had been used to small apartments. This could not have been less than forty feet in length and proportionately high and wide. He had always associated the presence of many books as the sign of a public library. His weary eyes could not even count the innumerable shelves, all book-laden. The furnishing was marvelous to his mind—great rugs, strange pictures and big, deep chairs. Only on the motion-picture screen had he envisaged such interiors. In a big open fire there were great logs burning cheerily. Sunlight poured through curtained windows.

"Gee!" said Jersey in that curious, husky whisper which had such carrying power. "My Gawd! Where's this?"

He tried to raise himself from the settee on which he lay, but weakness denied him movement. But he saw now that a brocaded-silk dressing-gown enwrapped him. When he had fallen forward in that dead town, he was draped in rags fitting for a successful scarecrow.

HIS exclamations brought a strange man to a doorway. He demanded all Jersey's powers of concentration. He saw a man of six feet two, broad across the shoulders and apparently in prime physical condition. He was dressed very much as the dreaded ranchers were except that his garments were better cut and of a finer material. Instead of khaki-cloth breeches, his were of corduroy. And the high brown boots, laced at the instep, were well polished. Jersey was used to judging the more obvious human qualities at a glance. He saw high courage on the bronzed face that looked down on him. It was a masterful face, too, he told himself. Jersey breathed relief when he decided that there was a certain whimsical humor in it. For a little while he was safe. This was not the man to throw him naked on an unknown shore. But there were mental attributes reflected in the human countenance of which Jersey was a poor judge. He did not perceive that the massive, finely molded head was indicative of unusual intellectual force. In age, the stranger was midway between thirty and forty. He had dark-gray eyes and a dominant nose. And the rather arrogant chin denoted a spirit not easily swayed.

As a rule, Jersey was one to await explanations rather than ask them. To-day he was startled enough to ask,

"Mister, where am I?"

"In my cabin, three thousand feet above sea-level."

The voice was not of a timbre familiar to Jersey. It was a well-modulated baritone. Once, when Jersey had fought a preliminary at the National Sporting Club in New York, he had heard such men as this discussing his qualities. They were in a box and wore evening dress. He imagined them to be of the Four Hundred and each one of them a millionaire.

"How'd I get here?" Jersey returned.

"I carried you. My choice was leaving you to die or bringing you to a place not dedicated to the reception of guests. I have little regard for human life. Who am I to interfere when a man's hour has struck? Why, then, you may ask, did I carry you over three miles of damnable roads. I could not answer. Perhaps it was to test my strength. Perhaps some shades of the departed urged me to the rescue. It may be, even, that I was lonely and welcomed so poor a thing as you who had come from my own city of New York."

"How did you know that?"

"You babbled in your delirium of Harlem." The big man slowly filled his pipe. "I am not sure that it is fair to judge of a man's vocabulary from his unconscious remarks, but you disappointed me. From what you let fall, it seems you have passed a life of persecution. Your body seems to have been recently damaged in unequal conflict with sharp-toothed animals."

"Dorgs," said Jersey briefly. It did not seem an incident of importance. What he earnestly desired to know was whether this superior person was going to permit him to remain. With one week of food and rest, Jersey felt he would be able to go on his quest of health and work. Happiness was as yet a great way off. He raised his head a little and looked for signs of his clothes.

"Your raiment has gone forever," said the stranger. "Dalia was for dispediculating it, but I decided on incineration. You owe a great deal to Dalia. For five days she has looked after you——"

"Have I bin here five days?"

"Yes. I repeat that you owe a great deal to Dalia. I recommend you not to presume upon her good nature. It is true she nursed you back to life, but that has not made her tolerant of you. In fact, she dislikes the idea of you immensely. Dalia thinks this camp and its routine may be disturbed by your presence."

Jersey was not concerned in Dalia's disapproval. He had been in a deplorable condition. The immediate fact to consider was the destruction of his clothing. Although polysyllables were beyond him, he guessed correctly. This stranger would not turn him out mother-naked to a world of mordant dogs and unfriendly cow-punchers.

"Have I got to beat it?" he demanded anxiously.

"When you are well enough. Dalia says that won't be for a month. She cherishes the simple creed that health is mostly a matter of good feeding."

"There's a lot to that," Jersey answered. "More than you know, boss."

"I suppose you realize that you were literally starving to death when I found you?"

"There's worse than that," Jersey said dismally. "I've got the con. My lungs has gone hard on me and me stummick's all wrong."

The other man shook his head.

"You can banish the tubercular theory," he said. "I know something about that. I came here to die of it and remained to weigh two hundred and twenty pounds. Your symptoms could not have escaped me. You may thank whatever gods the yeggs hold high that you have evaded that. That afternoon temperature, for example, there was no trace of it." He stopped suddenly. "Has my eloquence driven you to tears?"

"It ain't that," Jersey returned weakly. "It's what you say about my not having it. Gee! If you'd been wondering when you was going to begin to cough yourself to death you wouldn't wonder at my feeling this way. They told me at the horspital to keep in the open, sleep under the stars, and drink plenty of milk. Swell chance of my being handed out milk in this state! All I got was the open air and the stars."

"They cured you," said the tall man. "So why whine about the unspilled milk? You need not leave until you are able to do so. I fear you will somewhat interrupt my work." The big man frowned. "I hope none of your companions, envying your lot, will visit me."

"Companions?" Jersey retorted. "I ain't got no companions, mister. You said something about yeggs. I ain't no yegg!"

"No? I admit I conceived you to be an Odysseus of the I. W. W. brand. By what name do you call your pedestrian efforts?"

"I come out here to get well. I ain't no bum. I want work."

The tall man looked at him curiously. Such transient desires for work had amused him ere this in others of the wanderers.

"What qualifications have you to offer?"

Jersey thought a moment. Such a man as this might fight shy of having a pugilist around. He decided not to mention his connection with the manly art.

"I drove a wagon for the grocer," Jersey confided.

"Is that all?" The tall man looked scornful. "Nothing else?"

"I had a newspaper route."

There seemed something grimly humorous in the thought that a man had come to Arizona with so little to offer. The tall man paced up and down the room.

"You are," he declared magisterially, "one of those economically unfit millions who cumber the earth. Europe, with her apprentice systems, would have taught you something, because, in your caste, toil is compulsory. Here, with that tolerance which is not sympathy but lack of knowledge, you have been allowed to go your fruitless way unhindered. I have no doubt you held an evening wasted on which you did not dissipate your father's wages at a picture-show or a billiard-parlor."

IT WAS not the moment to defend his pleasureless existence or speak of humble toil well performed. The most important thing Jersey could do was to disarm what seemed the growing dislike this tall man had formed.

"You got me wrong, mister!" he cried. "I didn't come here to run out of working. I've always earned my keep before, and I can again when I'm well."

"If I cannot convict you of laziness, I can at least indict your intelligence. What am I to think of one who comes to these sparsely inhabited mountains looking for an employing grocer or a vacant newspaper route?" He paused a moment. Jersey could hear the distant patter of a horse's hoofs. "That is Dalia, riding up from her father's ranch to prepare my luncheon and yours." He frowned a little. "I had better explain Dalia. She is one of these fearless Western girls who admire strength and endurance. To her, you represent one of the least desirable classes."

"That don't worry me," Jersey returned. "I ain't bothering about skirts. The gal don't have to be afraid of me."

"Afraid!" The tall man seemed amused. "My good youth, she is afraid of none. She carries, always, a thirty-eight and can use it admirably. Her tongue can be sharp as a bee's sting. I am only fearful lest your stay here—and I absolve you from the blame of it—will cause her to leave. These people here have a fine and resolute independence. Dalia is not a domestic servant. She is doing this because I once helped her father. This is her manner of showing gratitude she would never express by word of mouth. Now, you, you prince of pedestrians, you have done nothing for her father."

Jersey's dream of a month of regular feeding and needed rest seemed about to vanish. After all, he had no claim on his rescuer or Dalia. Who was he to disrupt an orderly household?

"I'm sorry," he said huskily. "I guess I'll be well enough to go by to-morrer."

"Dalia says you will be here a month. Haply, she will be merciful. Here she is."

IF JERSEY turned the head that seemed all too heavy for the thin neck in order to gaze upon Dalia, it was with an interest that had its origin in fear. He conceived her to be a hostile force to be placated. He was prepared to meet a managing type of woman who had lost her youthful charm in the capture of the sterner qualities.

Dalia Thurston was nineteen. She was of middle height and slim. Scornful dark eyes gazed down on the prostrate Pike. Her hair was dark brown and wavy. Pike thought he had never seen such white, even teeth. In his wanderings he had seen other girls at ranches dressed something in her style and had not admired it; now he thought it the most charming garb a girl could wear. She wore top-boots with very high heels and silver spurs that made music as she moved. A serviceable short skirt of untanned leather was surmounted by a poplin blouse open at the throat. He used to say afterward that a referee could have counted a thousand over him and he would not have known it. Pike had not liked girls heretofore. They had seemed to him thoughtless and shallow. Now he understood that he had been walking in darkness until this moment. No wonder this lovely creature abhorred such a thing as he! She did not look at him again after that first scornful glance. It was to the tall man she turned her attention. There was an air of deep respect in her attitude.

"Well, Dalia, my child," said the tall personage, "you have nursed back to hope and consciousness, not a chevalier of the highroad but one who pursues respectability and work. He has come to bring newspapers each morn to us who dwell among the Black Falcon Mountains."

"Work!" Dalia's voice was sharp, incisive, unfriendly. "I know that brand. They always say they want work and always run away from it when it's offered. He's a regular hobo, Colonel; any one can see that."

A great bitterness descended upon Jersey. Wearily he turned his face away from her. Why had they tortured him with the respite of a month when they were even now planning to turn him adrift? No matter what he might say, she would never believe him. She had seen him in those scarecrow rags. His clawlike hand went to his chin. Yes; he still had that straggly beard at which every cow-puncher laughed. Tears came into his eyes. Surely this was what was meant by the bitterness of death. Passionately he longed to be able to vindicate himself. If she had but seen him in those brief days of prosperity when he dressed loudly at his manager's command! He remembered a violet-blue suit with yellow pin-stripes and daring turned-back cuffs. People had paused in the streets of Baltimore to remark it. She would not have curled her scornful lips at him then. But she would never believe it. There was no place for him here. He tried to sit up. There was in his mind, nebulously, the idea of leaving them immediately.

"Lie down," said Dalia. Her voice was more kindly. "Don't you understand you've got to stay in bed and be fed for weeks yet? You just keep quiet till I fix you up some soup." She disappeared through a swinging door into the kitchen.

"It's all right," said the man she had called "Colonel." "When our Dalia offers food, it is the sign, if not of friendship, at least of tolerance. To please her, eat what is set before you.

"I'd eat the dish if she wanted me to," said Pike huskily. His eyes were fastened on the door through which the girl had passed. So, thought the tall man, had he seen patient dogs wait for those they loved.

"I must leave you," said Jersey's host. "I have work to do."

But Jersey did not hear him. His lips were moving. He was repeating a name.

"Dalia!" murmured Jersey, smiling. "Dalia!—Dalia!"

The other shrugged his shoulders and left. Jersey's eyes were closed. When she came softly into the room, he did not hear her. He expected to be warned by the tinkling of the spurs she had removed.

"Dalia," he whispered, "Dalia."

"Well," the girl demanded, "I'm here. What is it?"

"I was just saying your name. It's like music."

"You leave music alone," she commanded, "and eat this soup."

She looked at him curiously. She had been the recipient of innumerable compliments from men. Men had fought for her smiles, but none had ever said her name was like music. Tom, to whom she was almost engaged, teased her about the name which he pronounced "Daley" and called her "Peony," "Cauliflower" and such horticultural names as occurred to him.

"I suppose," she said, pausing with the emptied bowl in her hand, "you tell all girls about their names being like music."

"I didn't like girls till I saw you. Them Noo York dames—" He paused. Not to Dalia of the open places and the frank airs could he say what he knew of those ladies his friends had loved. "I hadn't no use for them," he ended lamely.

Dalia tossed her head.

"I suppose you think what wouldn't be looked at by those New York girls is good enough for us." With that, she was gone.

HE FELL into a refreshing slumber and did not wake until late in the afternoon. He felt amazingly better. Timidly he called her name and she entered.

"The boss says," he began, "that I can't get no work around here."

"There's always work for men," she said, "and if Colonel Brimleigh says there's none for you, it's because he doesn't think you'll fit in. This is a cow-country. Up here it used to be a mining center, but the ore's worked out."

"Colonel," he repeated. "What's Colonel doing up here?"

"He's about the cleverest man in the world," she said, abandoning her reserve in a subject which woke enthusiasm. "He's a great scientist and writes books nobody here can understand. He had a laboratory built by the dump about half a mile away. There's radium and uranium and things you don't know about, and he experiments. Rich! Why, he bought over twenty thousand acres. This was a miner's shack when he came here to die two years ago. Look at it now! He saved dad's life. Nobody knew what was the matter with him."

"Is he a doctor?" Jersey found vast hope in the suggestion.

"He's a doctor of everything," said Dalia triumphantly. She ran to a book-shelf and removed a volume. "Can you read?" she demanded, as she turned to the title page.

"I went through grammar-school," said Jersey, not without dignity.

"That," Dalia explained, pointing to the first of a long row of initials appended to the name: "Lowden Brimleigh," "that means he's a doctor of medicine. This shows he's a doctor of science. 'Ph.D.' stands for doctor of philosophy. His mother and sister came out last Christmas. I never saw such clothes. Everybody knows the Brimleighs are rich. He was a colonel in the war and got gassed, but he's all right now. I guess he must be pretty strong to carry you over the mountains."

Dalia had some justification for her enthusiasm. Lowden Brimleigh was one of the most distinguished figures among the newer American scientists. After taking his M. D.—and medicine attracted him little—he turned his brilliant mind to mathematics. The book for which the University of Cambridge gave him a doctor's degree, "Considerations of the Function of a Complex Variable," has been translated into most European languages including the Scandinavian. Later, chemistry claimed his attention and his Göttingen Ph.D. was obtained by his "Gasanalytische Methoden." It was this work which attracted government attention to him early in 1917. His labors were necessarily secret, but it is known now that one of the more deadly gases was his invention. The victim of hard work and a chlorine cloud in France, he retired to Arizona, as he believed, to die. With returning health, he bent his thoughts to physics. And since he found carnotite ore in plenty on the property he had bought to ensure complete solitude, he plunged again into his experimenting. Brimleigh was never one to tread in other men's paths. He had destroyed many reputations and especially detested second-rate minds in high places. This was the man who found in Jersey Pike rather a problem.

Plainly Pike could not offer to aid such a man in his investigations.

"Ain't there anything I could do to earn my keep here?" he asked the girl. Since his eyes had seen her, he was desperately eager to remain. "Don't he keep any hired man?"

"Only Buck Hanahan," she said. "He looks after the horses. I suppose you don't know anything about them." She had little respect for the Easterner's knowledge of such things. But Jersey had not tended a grocery-horse for naught.

"Sure!" he said, eagerness in his voice. "I can look after hosses."

"You couldn't pry Buck out of that job with dynamite," she said. "I'm going now. The colonel will be back soon. You'll be all right."

He sank back on the couch, his closed eyes seeking to keep the vision of the girl from vanishing. He did not hear Brimleigh come in. Brimleigh's voice was the first indication Jersey had that he was not alone.

"No," said Brimleigh; "my name is not Dalia."

"Did I say that?" Jersey asked, blushing.

"You said it three times, and with such varied and tender inflections that I fear I am witnessing the birth of that obscure emotion known as love. Your affection, I may add, is hopeless. A stout fellow named Tom saw the maiden first."

Assuming, for the moment, the character of physician, Brimleigh made a thorough examination.

"You must have amazing vitality," he commented. "Your pulse is stronger, your temperature almost normal, and you apparently have the desire to get well. Dalia gave you a month. I think we can cut that time in half. Anything I can do for you?"

"A razor," Pike pleaded. "I want to get rid of this spinach. I must look like something the cat dragged in."

"To-morrow," Brimleigh told him.

"I'd like to fix it up before she comes," said Jersey timidly. "These alfalfa trimmings look like hell."

DALIA, being secretly of a romantic disposition, was pleased to find the scarecrow humanized. And, indeed, Jersey Pike was not ill-looking, although he had not a faint idea of it. Dalia thought it was an open and honest face which looked at her adoringly. And there was a certain humility in his manner which was a pleasing change from the rather arrogant way of the men at her father's ranch.

Within a week he was able to do odd jobs about the camp to help her. A wood-pile was no novelty to Jersey. Once he wandered down to the barn and looked at it wistfully, Hanahan was not there.

"Colonel Brimleigh, sir," said Jersey, on his return, "if Hanahan was to go, could I get his job?"

"Possibly. But Buck will not go. He is wedded to a job which is synonymous with a life of ease. I fear me he has a private still. Do not let him know you wish to be his successor, for his temper is imperfectly under control and he would assuredly seek to damage you."

"But you wouldn't object to me taking the job if he left?"

"Hanahan will not leave. When he announces that the fever of wandering has seized him and calls him to other climes, you can no doubt have his job."

"Dalia," Brimleigh said later, "I am a little uneasy about leaving you so long with a man about whom we know nothing. He has a pleasant smile and seems suspiciously ready to do anything to help; but would not that be the rôle a criminal seeking to gain confidence would assume? In a week I shall send him off. I think I shall type some of my notes this week."

"That means you'd be in your room here. You don't have to worry about Jersey. He's all right. I'm not afraid of him. A girl knows the sort of man she can trust. I guess it's instinct."

"All right," Brimleigh said, relieved. "But is it fair to let the poor creature fall head over ears in love with you?"

"How can I help that?" It was the feminine retort immemorial.

"Remember, he is only a child mentally."

Brimleigh had amused himself by putting his visitor through those exercises which, according to the Stanford-Terman revision of the Binet-Simon psychological tests determine one's intelligence quotient.

"Jersey," he had asked the gratified Pike, "if a horse standing on all four feet weighs twelve hundred pounds, how much will it weigh if it lifts one foot from the ground?"

"Nine hundred," Pike had returned, after triumphant mental arithmetic.

Jersey had given it as his opinion, when asked, that a man could not both sit and ride at the same time, ignoring the bicycle entirely. And when Brimleigh had declared him to be twelve years old, he had not ventured to dispute the dictum.

"Jersey," Brimleigh said, when the boy had been three weeks at the camp, "you are now able to continue your conquering way. For those household chores you have done I shall pay you. Furthermore, you may have the clothes you are wearing. You will have the advantage which many presidents have been denied. You will start with fifty dollars and a good suit. I have arranged for you to be taken from the end of the trail to the station, which is distant forty miles. You will start before Dalia gets here. I shall instruct Hanahan to have the horses ready." Brimleigh's eyes had a kind look in them. "I wish you good fortune, Jersey; and while I do not give advice as a rule, I recommend you to learn to do some one thing really well."

"Thank you sir," said Jersey. "I won't forget what you've done for me. Shall I go down and arrange with this Hanahan?"

Within an hour, Brimleigh perceived that Jersey had struck up an acquaintance with the surly Buck. They were toiling up the trail together. Jersey was apparently conversing eagerly. Buck seemed to be less anxious to talk. Brimleigh wondered why Buck should come up afoot when he rarely stirred except in the saddle.

"Colonel, sir," Jersey began, "Buck thinks he'd like to see a bit of the world. He ain't exactly tired of his job, but the fever of wandering calls him to other climes. Don't it Buck?"

"Like hell it does!" Buck Hanahan muttered. His eyes would not meet those of his employer.

"How's that?" said Jersey in a sharper tone than Brimleigh had ever heard him employ.

"I'm through," said Buck sullenly.

"I thought you were here for life," Brimleigh remarked. "What's the grievance?"

"Nuthin'," said Buck. "Jest decided to travel a bit. All set and r'aring to go."

Brimleigh beheld the twain wander down the mountain. What madness, he wondered, had seized Buck? On considering the matter, he was not displeased that Jersey was to remain. Sometimes Brimleigh was taken with the desire to talk. Jersey Pike was born an interested listener. Buck Hanahan had no social qualities. For some time past Brimleigh had feared Buck's attention to the product of an illicit still had caused him to neglect his horses. Perhaps it was for the better, this change.

Dalia, next morning, was more astounded than Brimleigh.

"Why," she cried, "Buck will never get a job that suited him like this! Jersey'll tell me the real reason."

But Jersey could only repeat that he had talked so glowingly to Buck about the East and her opportunities, the glamour of the greater world and the glories of cities that Buck had been fired by enthusiasm.

"Jersey," said Brimleigh, regarding him with more interest than usual, "I cherish the conviction that you have, in your own idiom, 'put one over on me.'"

"Me?" said Jersey, with respect. "How could I do that to you when I'm only twelve years old?"

"Buck is certain to call at the ranch," Dalia said, "and I'll find out from the boys."

But herein she was disappointed. Buck called at the ranch. He was filled with illicit liquor and quarrelsome. He seemed to resent any one's suggesting that his determination to enlarge his mental horizon was out of the way. And as he grew less coherent, dark threats of vengeance edged into his conversation. Never before in his forty years of life had Buck been so complex. And when he left, none knew more than when he came.

JERSEY PIKE went to his new work with enthusiasm. In fact, enthusiasm was his most marked characteristic. Never in his life had he been shown such kindness. A happy home life had been denied him. Here, in this lone camp, he was well housed, admirably fed. And he liked to feel that he earned his keep. And more than all was the presence of the adorable Dalia. Now that he had succeeded to some of the raiment which Brimleigh had discarded, with renewed health and increased weight, Jersey presented the appearance of an urban type secretly grateful to the girl's eye. He had traveled over many states, and she delighted to ask of cities and theatres and department stores.

"It's a relief," said Dalia, when Brimleigh had asked her to sum up in a sentence Jersey's rank as a conversationalist, "to have some one around who isn't always bragging of who he can lick or how long it took him to throw and hog-tie a steer at the rodeo. Tom is like that; so was Buck. They all are, and I'm plumb sick of it. Jersey never talks about himself." Dalia felt herself coloring under the colonel's quizzical glance. "He'd rather talk about anything else."

"As, for example, you. Dalia, my dear child, be reasonable. Admit that Jersey has an inferior type of mind and that his future and yours diverge. He is an inefficient. You may say that he is holding down Buck Hanahan's job. True; but Buck won his saddle at the rodeo, and even your father admits he is a first-class cow-man. Tom, too. They are both highly efficient in some one line. Poor Jersey has nothing to commend him but a willing spirit and a ready smile. On his own confession he has no trade and no money. Suppose I shut up this camp and go East. What will happen to him? You don't like to think about it. Tom is the sort of man your father would welcome as a son-in-law."

"I'm not going to marry Tom or any one else," Dalia said almost sullenly.

"Tom thinks you are."

"Tom thinks because he always gets his way with the boys, he has only to lift his finger and I'll come to him. I tell you girls aren't what they used to be."

"Men are, though. I'm mentioning Tom because he has signified his intention of calling upon me this afternoon and riding home with you. He has nothing to say to me. There is, indeed, a faint antagonism, and has been since that affair of the weight-lifting. He is coming to see the intruder about whom you have talked. Tom is a simple type. He probably has grown to regard Jersey as a rival to be eliminated. And in an elimination-test, I fear our poor Jersey goes to the wall. The question rises: What will be your attitude if Tom, in his superb, direct and virile manner, gives Jersey the lie and chastises him? I shall not permit it to happen in this house, but I can't answer for Jersey's well-being when I'm not near. There will be trouble, and you can regard Jersey as the precipitating cause."

"I'd never speak to Tom again if he did that."

"That will hardly move Tom. He will not believe it, for one thing. I confess to being a little anxious. There are concepts of hospitality as old as the race. Jersey is under my vine and fig tree as it were."

"Jersey won't make trouble," Dalia said eagerly, "especially if I tell him to be nice to Tom. You know he's got a soft, pleasant way of talking."

"Has he?" the other asked, smiling. "Perhaps his best efforts are directed to you for your entertainment. I hope your Tom understands that my wrath descends on all who abuse the guest beneath my rooftree."

"He isn't *my* Tom," said Dalia. "Sometimes I think I hate all men."

TOM came. He was a tall, well-made man of seven and twenty. Success in most of his undertakings had given him an air of arrogance which did not sit ill.

It was, perhaps, unfortunate for Jersey that he should have been engaged in scrubbing the floor of the big kitchen when the visitor arrived. Jersey knew that it was a task Dalia had determined upon, and it was his delight to save her from it. A voluminous apron enwrapped him. The footsteps behind him were, he supposed, those of Colonel Brimleigh.

"Just taking a little exercise, sir," he remarked, not looking up.

"Hey, gal!" Tom drawled. "I'm lookin' for a hobo that calls himself 'Jersey.'"

Jersey flushed. He divested himself of the apron and stood up. He groped mentally for a biting retort but without success.

"I'm Jersey," he said; "but I ain't never been no hobo."

"It's a man, after all!" said Tom, with exaggerated surprise. "You look like bein' a useful feller round the house. Say; I've got some clothes as want sewin' on. I'll send 'em up by Daley. Daley says there's nothin' in the household line you dassn't wrassle with."

Jersey Pike looked at Tom in that deliberate and provocative manner in which opponents of the ring had often gazed at him. It had the effect of making an adversary feel dissatisfied with every one of his physical attributes, doubtful of his mental and moral equipment and, finally, filled him with flaming wrath. Dalia, standing unseen by them in the doorway, was amazed at what Jersey's face was capable.

"Now, then," she called sharply; "what have you boys been saying?"

"I was just askin' this young woman to darn my socks," Tom drawled, "and he was so grateful he couldn't say nuthin'."

"You know he's not a woman!"

"It sure ain't a man," Tom retorted. "If it was a man, I'd push his face in."

Jersey Pike had often entered the ring against heavier and stronger men. He had gone to the fray knowing he had little chance. But he had never been afraid of anything on two feet.

"I'm just as good a man as you are," he said equably, wrapping himself again in the apron. "You fellers make me tired. Jest because you can make the figger eight with the clothes-line don't prove you're men." Jersey shook an impressive forefinger at Tom. "I'd like to take you back to Noo York when I go, but you'd die of a broken neck. Yes, sir; that's wht'ud kill you! You'd stand on a Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street and you'd keep turning your head round looking at the big buildings that it'd twist itself off. Take my advice"—Jersey adopted the air of a large tolerance—"and keep in the backwoods where you belong. No good going out of your class." Ignoring Tom's rising wrath, he took again his brush in hand.

"Say!" Tom shouted, restrained only from violence by Dalia's cold glance. "Do you think you're in my class?"

"Nope," said Jersey, and went to his knees. "I got work to do," he went on, "and I don't want no stable-lads round my kitchen."

Tom looked at Dalia and gasped. There, beneath him, splashing soapy water over his feet, was one whom he had sworn to chastise. This, evidently, was not the place or the time.

"What about payin' us boys a little visit on Labor day? There's somethin' I'd like to say to you alone."

"Any time at all," Jersey returned.

Dalia, relieved that there had been no more than talk, steered the bellicose ranch foreman to the large room. Tom touched his head solemnly.

"He's plumb loco, Daley. If you hadn't 'a' bin there, I'd sure have fetched him a crack on the jaw."

Dalia looked at him scornfully.

"Brave, aren't you?" she jeered. "You know you're taller and heavier, and he's been ill and isn't a fighter. You like them to come small, don't you?" She knew she was unfair to Tom, who regarded weight in an opponent, whether for or against him, as merely incidental.

"Listen, Daley," Tom said slowly; "I come up to see this feller you was talkin' about and, honest, he's wuss'n I expected." Tom raised his voice so that the scrubber might hear. "If he stays round here much longer, I'll certainly give him one hell of a beatin'."

IN THE week that followed, Jersey made no reference to Tom's invitation. Cheerful as ever, he varied his occupations. He chopped wood more vigorously; where he had walked, he now ran. In the shelter of the barn he shadow-boxed with none but the horses to see.

The afternoon of the day preceding the holiday, Brimleigh found Dalia crying.

"It's Jersey!" she wailed. "There's nothing I can say will stop him going to the ranch to-morrow. He doesn't know Tom and his gang."

"Perhaps it's for the best." Brimleigh found himself repeating platitudinous things. "Tom is out for vengeance. He detests Jersey for many reasons. First, on your account. Then there is the pack-instinct, which tells him to destroy a type unknown to him. Tom comes of a stock which settles its differences with its fists. Illogical, perhaps, and against the laws often. But it breeds a virile, dominant people. Only such stock as that made this empire of the West possible. One cannot bring the Eastern code here with success. Jersey is out of place. He must be taught that you are different from the girls he has met."

"Why am I different?" There was a hint of rebellion in her voice.

"Because you live in a community where men judge themselves by other standards. Jersey has his good points. But how could Thurston's daughter regard a man too weak to fight for her? Dalia, you could never be happy knowing every man sneered at Jersey for a weakling. It is a woman's right to expect her man to be able to fight for her. Jersey is the typical product of a big city and its environs. No doubt there he would seem as imposing as Tom. But you know different. You haven't been brought up among Western men for nothing."

DALIA threw her head back. It was as though she shook the tears from her misty brown eyes.

"I know," she said wearily; "I know. But a woman wants a man who will keep on loving her when she isn't pretty any more, or young. I want a man who will be unhappy when I'm out of his sight."

"O romance!" Brimleigh sighed. "O sentimental youth! O dewy dawns! O nights of moonlight and the perfume of roses! Dalia, my child, Dame Nature—enemy of woman—is weaving a snare for you, and it is your tragedy that you do not see the bait. Were Jersey able to carve a place for himself here, he should have my blessings and this camp and the land about it when I leave Arizona at Christmas. But he is not your kind, and I shall take him back with me to the East and buy a country store for him where he will be happy evermore."

"Not without me, he won't!" Dalia said stubbornly.

"At least he will be successful."

"What's that compared with happiness?"

"Dalia," he said gravely, "sometimes I find that you guess at great truths; and I especially dislike empiricism. I will meddle no more. I perceive I have been standing side by side with Mrs. Partington."

"Mrs. Partington?" she queried.

"An admirable but misguided woman who attempted to banish the invading Atlantic from her threatened home with a broom. Send Jersey to me. I owe him a last warning."

"Have you any idea of the reception you will get at the Thurston ranch?" Brimleigh asked, when Jersey, looking particularly fit, came into the room.

"Pretty good guess," said the unperturbed Jersey.

"If you suppose Dalia's presence will protect you, let me advise you of a miscalculation. You may have wondered how it is that I am respected among men who remain in abysmal ignorance of the things of the intellect and the progress of modern science. In the first place, I was received kindly, because it was thought I came here to die. Then, too, I had some consideration, because I was, in their standards, rich. But I quickly saw that they worshiped masculine prowess of the body and not the mind. I am not without my vanities. I wished to be known among them as a man. Jersey, I stage-managed the thing elaborately. At Yale, fifteen years or more back, I had a passion for lifting heavy weights. I developed bunches of useless muscles. When my health improved, I set about getting these back. In my inviolate laboratory, I rigged up heavy apparatus. It took me six months to be ready. Then I went to Thurston's and guided the talk to strength. I soon had them all trying to lift heavy weights. Finally, there was a moment when Tom was victor. Then it was I stepped into the arena. A bar of iron that he could not lift with both hands I put over my head with one arm. Others from distant ranches contested me. But they had not the muscles trained to one end."

"Gee!" Jersey cried enthusiastically. "So you licked Tom!"

"And humiliated him. I fear Tom still resents it. But when he admitted, *coram publico*, that he hoped I would never 'fetch him a crack on the jaw,' it was the proudest moment of a life that had not been barren of distinctions. I tell you this not to boast but to warn you. You are now restored to health. You cannot win their sympathy. You are penniless. You cannot, therefore, win the respect money gives. Worst of all, you have not a single physical attribute—so far as I know—that will make them respect you. Jersey, if you desire to save Dalia from bitter humiliation, don't go."

"That's just why I gotta go," Jersey said unexpectedly.

Brimleigh turned away.

"'*Quem deus vult*'," he muttered. "All right, Jersey; I see I can do nothing."

"There's one thing you could do," Jersey said timidly. "I'd like the loan of those tan tennis-shoes that you said you never wore."

"They are yours," Brimleigh answered, with a large gesture. "This is the pride that goes before a fall."

"What did he say?" Dalia demanded, when Jersey reached the kitchen.

"Lent me them swell Russia-leather shoes with rubber soles."

"Oh, Jersey," she sighed, "please don't go down to the ranch! I couldn't bear to see you hurt."

Jersey laughed. Dalia had often heard him laugh before. He had developed into a very cheerful being of late. But this laugh had overtones of scorn in it. She wished he would understand the peril that involved him. Dalia was looking into the clear, unafraid eyes of a different Jersey. She did not protest when he put his arms about her and kissed her. She nestled against him and cried. Jersey looked at her almost with reverence. He had the strength of ten.

"Dalia," he whispered, "they won't hurt me. I'm not afraid of this feller, Tom. When he got fresh with me the other day, I didn't do nothing, because I wasn't sure you weren't stuck on him. Now I know you ain't, there's a big difference. They're just a bunch of cheap preliminary scrappers, and they don't make me lose no beauty-sleep."

Dalia was unconvinced. Here was the boastful male in the ascendent. She saw that he had that strange and unswervable will that sometimes distinguishes the meek. It was plain he would go. Very well; she would see that no harm came to him. She was, after all, the boss's daughter and had her fixed status as such. Before she left, she made him promise her not to get into a fight.

"Not unless you say so," he agreed, after a pause. "Dalia, I'm not looking for trouble. I'm peaceable, just like Joe Gans was. They say down in Baltimore Joe'd run a mile sooner than get into a street mix-up, and yet I guess he was pretty fair to middling."

As Dalia rode home, and more slowly than usual, she could see nothing bright about the future. Despite the warnings of her father and Colonel Brimleigh, she had fallen in love with one of the economically unfit. And to-morrow he would ride down to the ranch, there to meet hostile males bent on humiliating him.

BRIMLEIGH watched Jersey making an elaborate toilet next morning with impatience. Jersey prepared breakfast as usual. He was gaining some small skill in the art of cooking omelets. He had definite uses now in the household. Jersey wore a dark-gray flannel suit with white pin-stripes. It was Brimleigh's gift. He had chosen a white-silk shirt with turn-down collar. The socks of silk toned with the Russia-leather tennis-shoes. Altogether, Jersey presented a distinguished front to the world. He mounted the quietest of the three horses and set out on the longest ride he had yet taken.

"Damn it!" snapped Brimleigh, watching him mount. "Aren't you nervous? Have you no premonitions?"

Jersey showed his even teeth in a smile. He was used to hearing words that held no meaning for him. He answered the only intelligible sentence.

"Me?" he returned. "I ain't the nervous kind. This is a holiday for me."

The Thurston ranch was a big one. Jersey judged the owner to be well-to-do. There were horses in corrals, milch kine, pigs, poultry and large barns and outhouses. Thurston was a man of fifty, not as tall as Jersey but of uncommon breadth. He had shrewd eyes and a dominant, almost cruel mouth. It was plain he had not expected to meet such sartorial elegance, such urban distinction. His "Pleased to meet you" was born rather of custom than sincerity.

"Look out for Tom," Dalia whispered, as the foreman and a bunch of men strolled toward him.

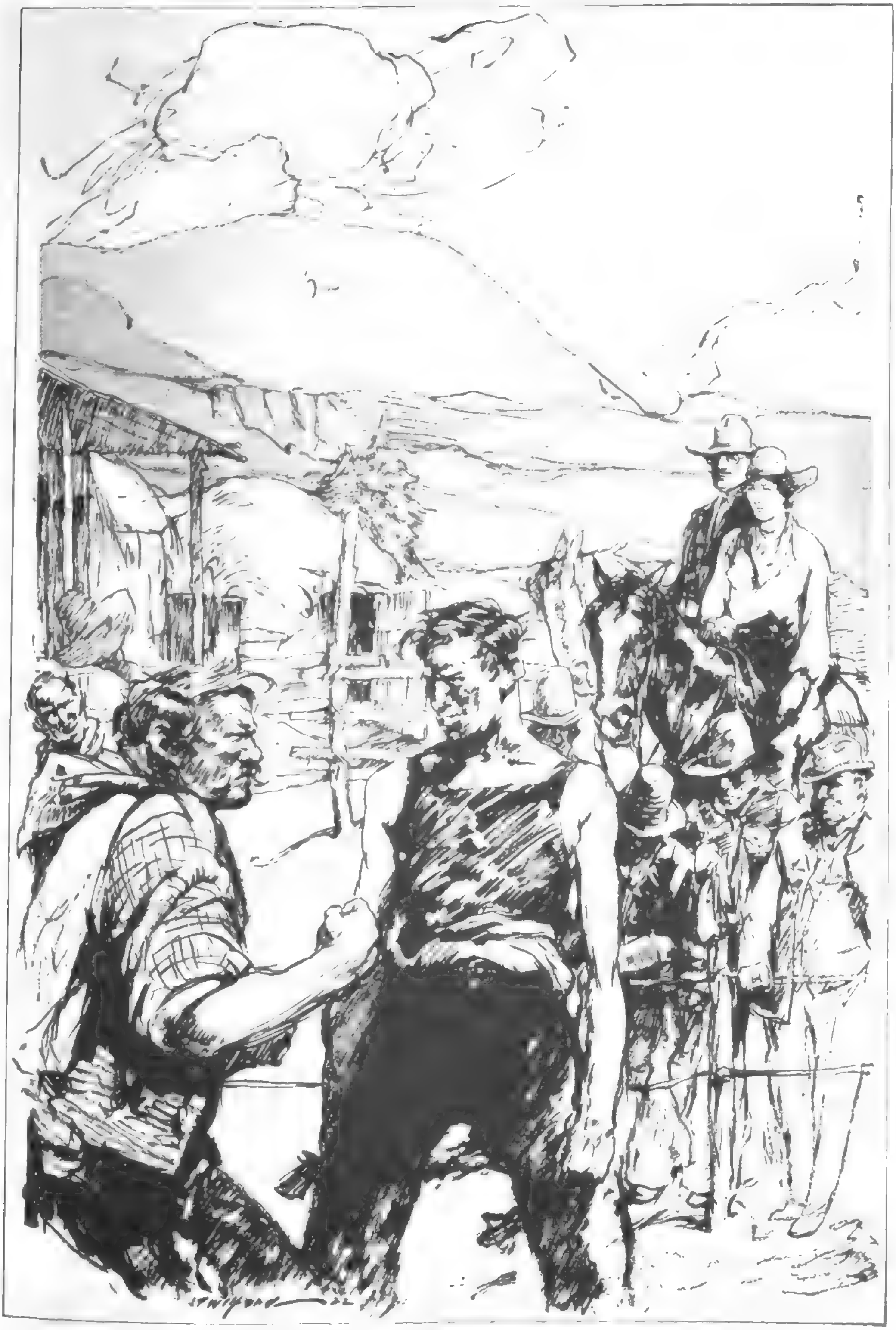
The warning was needed, for Tom was in an ugly mood. Last night, Dalia had told him outright she would never marry him. Tom knew very well the reason.

"This is it," said Tom loudly, as he drew near. "Ain't it dressed swell? Who says bein' a he pot-walloper don't pay?"

"Brush by," said Jersey, with lofty politeness. "You take up the view. Nice place you got here, Mr. Thurston. Puts me in mind of New Jersey up around Budd's Lake." Jersey admired the view ostentatiously. He contrived to turn his back upon Tom. Nor would he answer any of the foreman's questions. Now and again he recommended him to stand from between him and some view which he and Dalia designed to admire together. Trying to keep the peace, Dalia took the visitor over the ranch buildings. She marveled at the composure of the stranger. Could he not see that the storm must break soon?

It was when Texas Dwyer openly taunted Tom with being outgeneraled by the Easterner that Tom lost control of his temper.

"I make you tired, do I?" Tom snarled, when Jersey had asked him to waft himself away. "Here's the best pick-me-up I



"Was you trying to hit me?" Jersey said. "I thought you was trying to catch flies. If you want to hit me, why, come on!" He stood with lowered hands in the ring's center.

know." He slapped Jersey across the face. Instinctively the men formed a ring. This was the beginning. But Jersey did not run true to Arizonan form. He took out a silk handkerchief and wiped his cheek.

"Sure!" he said equably. "I got your number long ago, Tom." He saw that Dalia was looking at him, horrified. In that moment she was her father's daughter, holding physical cowardice as man's basest sin. "Yes," Jersey went on, without heat; "I got you, Tom, and I'd 'a' talked back at you long ago, but Dalia here said I wasn't to fight. I guess she don't mind so much now."

Dalia did not look at Jersey.

"I hate you, Tom!" she cried.

Thurston edged his way to the center of the group.

"What's up?" he asked.

"I gotta give this bird a lesson," said his guest.

"That's the way to talk!" said Mr. Thurston, with enthusiasm. "I won't have no gun-fightin'—don't hold with it—but what did God Almighty give men two fists fer ef it weren't to settle little arguments?"

Jersey looked at the ring of eager cow-punchers and shook his head.

"That ain't the way," he remarked. "Let's have it done in first-class shape. Any of you clothes-line jerkers know the rules?"

After a moment, for Jersey's remarks concerning the technic of the lariat were not well received, Mr. Thurston admitted having refereed some fights at Dallas.

"Fine!" said Jersey. "You're elected. You tell these ginks to put up posts and some of them clothes-lines for ropes." He looked about him and frowned. "There ain't twenty people. Say; why not invite some of the neighbors in?"

"He's trying to run out of it!" Tex Dwyer cried. "Wants to beat it while we're diggin' holes for the posts. We ain't suckers here."

But Thurston was pleased with the idea. It was a commendable scheme. It would be a great holiday. There was sufficient of the lamented Hanahan's distillate on hand to make the gathering memorable. Thurston constituted himself a guard upon the unknown fighter. Not a foot could Jersey stir without him. Dalia was not to be seen. Inquiries could bring him no news of her. He passed miserable hours wondering where she was. Mr. Thurston was not a cheerful conversationalist. He had a retentive memory for the names of those who had died in the ring.

"Them fellers," he said, "died after bein' hit with gloves, and this yere is a bare-knuckle scrap."

"Sure!" said Jersey. "I know. What time will them friends of yours come?"

"I said we'd begin about four. Some of 'em have got a long ways to come." Mr. Thurston, under his guise of an amiable *raconteur*, hid a vivid dislike of Jersey. Tom had asserted Dalia was in love with the intruder and had rejected him on that account. Well, Tom would teach him something.

And when Jersey ceased to pay attention to his recurring anecdotes, the rancher imagined his anxious expression and vagrant glances bespoke fear. Thurston began to think Tex Dwyer had been right and that the disliked one was meditating flight. Jersey found himself surrounded with a cordon of cow-punchers determined not to be balked of the coming fray. They agreed that he was no longer the jaunty youth of the earlier hours.

Jersey would have agreed with them heartily. He was miserable. Dalia had forsaken him. She had judged him a coward. He wished he could summon such a stern spirit to his aid that he could regard this defection as proving her unworthy. But his love for her was too deep and sure for that. Perhaps Mr. Thurston repented him of his garrulity. From his appearance, Jersey looked as though he intended not to raise his fists. Very slim and boyish he looked among the heavier-built men.

"You ain't goin' to get killed," said Mr. Thurston. "I'm refereein' this fight, and I'll see you ain't hurt bad."

"Go to hell!" snapped Jersey, thereby damming any further floods of sympathy. Mr. Thurston shook his head. He was witnessing the spectacle of a man driven desperate by fear.

SO ELOQUENT had Mr. Thurston been on the telephone that men flocked from distant ranches. There were strangers. A fat man who represented a Chicago farm-implement house had come, and welcomed the opportunity to meet future customers. A veterinarian, widely known as an amateur of the sport, consented to act as timekeeper. The fat man—Weems, by name—was inclined to think the match unfair. Jersey's mood of depression seemed to have made him shrink; whereas Tom, belligerent and boastful, towered vast above him. It was Jersey's black hour. He heard loudly expressed remarks which had to do with yellow streaks. And they did not win even a flash of anger from him.

It wanted a few minutes of the time set for the affair to begin when there was a stir on the outskirts of the crowd. Jersey looked up to see Dalia and Colonel Brimleigh. Brimleigh was on the big chestnut horse which had given Jersey a great deal of trouble. Dalia, too, was mounted. Plainly she had ridden to the camp to fetch him. Instantly Brimleigh dominated the whole situation. He was, physically, the biggest man there. And he had an air of habitual authority on his face. The cow-punchers looked uneasily one at another. That he had come to save the shivering Jersey they had no doubt. Dalia was to blame for it.

"What damnable folly is this?" Brimleigh cried, pointing to the twenty-foot ring. He turned on Tom. "This is your doing."

Tom was not easily to be robbed of his vengeance. Now was the opportunity to prove before Dalia and his world what a man he was.

"It had to come," Tom said stubbornly, "and the sooner it's over the better. This yere Jersey don't belong, and he's got to find it out."

Brimleigh climbed down from his horse.

"I can see," he said, "that you are determined upon a fight. Very well; you shall not be disappointed." A cheer went up at his words. None cheered more loudly than the fat drummer. "But I won't have Jersey manhandled. He must weigh thirty pounds less than you and lacks two inches in height. Furthermore, he has been seriously ill and is untrained. You want your fight. Very well, Tom; but you'll have a different opponent. I'll fight you."

IT WAS now that Jersey suddenly woke to life and resumed something of his earlier swagger. The look he shot at Brimleigh was like that a loving dog gives his master. Brimleigh was strong, but what did he know about fighting? Never, never could such a scheme be countenanced. He wanted to intervene before Brimleigh, in his rage, had passed some unforgivable insult.

"No need to worry about me, Colonel, sir," he declared. "I gotta give this bird a lesson. He give me a clip across the jaw, like this—" Jersey's bony knuckles left their flaming imprint on Tom's cheek. Brimleigh acknowledged himself beaten.

"Every fool to his folly," he said, and looked at his henchman in sorrow. But Jersey's manner was now entirely different. Dalia had been absent only because she feared for his safety. Before them all he put a protecting arm about her shoulder.

"Don't you worry about me," he whispered.

Brimleigh's dominance was rapidly being eclipsed. He beheld a new and brisker Jersey. Jersey took from a hip-pocket a roll of bills. It was made up of the fifty Brimleigh had given him and skilfully reenforced by sundry layers of paper. It was an artifice constantly employed by certain of his former associates. To the cow-punchers, he appeared in the rôle of capitalist.

"Money," Jersey began, "is the honest-to-goodness little talker. I got this to bet on myself. What odds do I get?"

Weems was the first to take him up; then the veterinarian. Brimleigh shook his head. Already he saw that, were Jersey to lose, he must pay three hundred dollars. And if he won—an impossible event—he would make a thousand. But there was an amazing confidence now about Jersey. Might there not be some justification in his mind for what seemed an incredible folly? Brimleigh did not go away as he had intended to do. From the saddle he had an excellent view. He saw that Jersey was far more suitably garbed for the encounter than Tom. Those Russia-leather ribbed shoes were better than Tom's high-heeled riding-boots.

Jersey had seen too many accidental punches in the ring not to know he was in danger from a man of Tom's kind. He expected Tom to rush, bull-like, at him directly the bell sounded. If Tom, by superior strength, could batter down his defense, things might go ill.

Tom did what was expected. But he reckoned on an opponent who would hold his ground and swap punches. He was not used to those whose feet were trained. Jersey glided out of reach and gave him for the second time a bare-knuckled blow as he was carried by with his own impetus. Then Jersey turned ostentatiuosly to admire the view. It was in the first clinch that Weems and Brimleigh made the discovery that, whereas Tom was merely trying to get his arms free to smite Jersey on his smiling face, his opponent was getting in some very useful in-fighting.

And all the while Jersey drew on his memory for those gibes which had been flung at him in other encounters. On the whole he was successful, although Dalia's presence—she was on her horse by Brimleigh's side—robbed him of some of the most bitter jests. Tom believed himself to be the victim of a temporary accident which must speedily give way to victory. He did not know that Jersey was feeling him out. When the second round began, Jersey knew that Tom had strength, gameness and activity—beyond that, nothing. And he further understood that Tom's rage, fanned by this unexpected conversational onslaught, was robbing him of his advantages of reach and strength.

Poor Dalia, impressed by Tom's ferocity, and not comprehending that these deft blows administered to the body were weakening, saw a moment approaching when Jersey's luck must go. That he evaded the swinging arms so long seemed to her only an indication that he was favored by the fortune of the moment. She could not understand why Brimleigh's gloom was gone.

"Stand still and fight," Tom blared, when he had missed Jersey's face a dozen times and received never a blow in return.

"Was you trying to hit me?" Jersey said, using the time-worn gibe. "I thought you was trying to catch flies. If you want to hit me, why, come on! I won't move."

And he did not. He stood with lowered hands in the ring's center. Tom swung at him ferociously and missed. His second blow fanned an ear. All that Jersey did was to grin and move his head with lightning swiftness as the fist approached. It was when the drummer beheld this that he sought anxiously to recover his approaching losses by seeking to bet on Jersey.

"I'm tired of you," Jersey said to his opponent; "and Dalia and me is planning to have a boat-ride on the lake before supper. Listen, Tom; when I count as far as three, I'm going to paste you on the snoot. And when I gets as far as ten, I'm going to clip you over the left eye—see?" Jersey began to count. "One. Two. Three." His feet moved a little, and the right fist, brought into action for the first time, caught Tom square on his nose. "Four. Five. Six. Seven. Eight. Nine. Ten!" The blow on the eye knocked Tom down.

It was in the third round that Jersey, feeling confident, cut loose to give the holiday-makers a run for their money. Not once did Tom lay a fist on the elusive Jersey. Never again would Tom dare boast of his prowess. There were those about the ring who already marveled they had believed stories of his ability. Was this staggering, half-blinded creature the Thurston foreman they had been beaten by? They saw that he was being played with, mocked and shown up by some one whose skill was such as they had never seen before.

"You amachoors," said Jersey, at last, "give me a pain. Thought you was some scrapper, didn't you?" He yawned elaborately. "Good-night, Tom."

And for Tom, during full five minutes, it was night. Brimleigh sighed with relief when he saw returning consciousness. Tom gulped down some fiery liquid his employer urged upon him. He noted that Thurston regarded him with almost contempt. On his other side was the stout drummer, who had lost fifty dollars through his defeat.

"You never laid a finger on him," commented the ranchman. "Such an exhibition I never did see. Made you a laughin'-stock."

"Laughing-stock!" cried the drummer bitterly. "That's too mild. I bet my money on you because they said you could fight."

"This feller, Jersey Pike, is some scrapper," said Thurston. "He won my money, but he earned it honest." Thurston paused.

Strange expressions were struggling across the face of the dolorous drummer.

"Jersey Pike!" he cried. "Have I been wasting my perfectly good money betting a fish like this could trim Jersey Pike? Listen, you two bright little alfalfa hounds!"

AS HE divulged what he knew, Brimleigh was making those remarks which were widely quoted.

"Jersey," said the great Brimleigh, "I thought you could do nothing well. I said you would not fit in here. I take it all back. I am ashamed to have been so poor a critic of a man. I perceive you do one thing supremely well. Furthermore, I see you can be elected sheriff whenever you run for office. You may inform your future father-in-law that the camp and as much land as you can use is yours for a wedding-gift."

There came another interruption. Tom and Thurston, the stout drummer talking eagerly between them, approached the central group. Tom was particularly excited. His accents were somewhat clouded by reason of facial distortion. It was evident he sought to justify himself to Dalia and the colonel.

"Daley," Tom cried, "this fat feller says Jersey fought Bud Brennan to a draw in Baltimore and was robbed of the decision."

"That's gospel truth, ma'am," said the stout stranger. "My brother saw the fight and said it was a robbery."

"Bud Brennan's champion now!" Tom exclaimed. "He can lick 'em all. I guess"—Tom's manner was now one of pleasurable excitement—"I guess this scrap ain't goin' to hurt my record any." He held out a swollen hand to his opponent. "You certainly put one over on me Jersey, and I'll say I had it comin' my way."

Tom saw his blemished reputation returning undimmed. Henceforth he would be known as one who had battled champions. And Dalia was the victor's prize. It was the code. The better man had won, and he knew he must rest content.

Everybody's January Program

A COMPLETE NOVEL

Facing the East — By Will Levington Comfort

Youth in its tragic search for the fulfilment of its dreams.
A story for young boys, and old ones, too

SHORT STORIES

On and On — By Louis Lee Arms

Containing an excellent suggestion for a New-Year resolution

"'Gee! 'Taint Easy" — By Henry Francis Granger

Bobby and Theodore tackle that momentous problem—the origin of Man

The Cloven Heel — By Walter De Leon

Proving that a detective may be funny as well as mysterious

A Matter of Face — By James L. Hutchison

The persistence of the Oriental in protecting his pride

The Five Brass Cartridge-Cases — By Frederic Arnold Kummer

Evidence that there is still another mystery story with novelty

Three Serials and a Play—all in

January *EVERYBODY'S*—out December 15th

The Call *of the* Flock

Great Men Have Learned Much from Close Observation of Other Forms of Life. There's Food for Thought and Entertainment in this Nature-Story

By F. St. Mars

IT WAS a terrible moment. The dry, coughing, clapping roar of the gun seemed to tear and rend and splinter the immemorial silence of the estuary. The little stab of flame below, as of a fiery snake's tongue, flickering, as a snake's tongue will, out and in, was a small matter compared with the strangely terrifying, cutting, ripping whistle of the shot.

For the flash of a second's fraction, no longer than the gun-flash, he might have wondered what on earth the thing was at. In another flash, the vision of his companion on the right, stopping so suddenly that his legs seemed to go over his head, and then sliding down tail first and behind him—his wings shattered and flapping loose—to the solid earth, had told him, even if a second and a simultaneous vision of his next ahead giving an odd little sickening shiver, and then, for absolutely no reason that he could make of it, begin to plane down unsteadily to land, could have left him in ignorance. But there could be no doubt, anyway, since the blood of his companion on the left covered him suddenly, as with a gentle spray, and he looked and saw that that companion had no longer any eye on that side and only half a leg. The vision faded, as if pulled steadily down to the ground by a string, and he was left alone out of four, unhurt or not—he could not yet realize *that*—unconsciously twisting and darting, and drawing zigzags through the free air.

For a space he flew on; then his brain stunned by the suddenly unexpected, by the, to him, cataclysm, unaware at first, till the increasing strain of it absolutely insisted on his brain's attention, that the hurtling, mad speed his subconscious mechanism had literally "jumped" to, in the space of some unknown fraction of a second, was, now that it was being kept up, beginning to tell upon him. Moreover, there was no longer any need for it. He found himself, a little surprisedly, at the three-thousand-foot level, to which he had climbed, or "flared," without knowing it, and he had been below the one-hundred-foot level when "it" had happened.

There was no longer any danger up here from the gun—for him. He could hear it coughing and clapping away, far, far below, at his wounded fellows, and could even see, if he chose, what horrors it was making of them.

And all in a flash he realized that he was alone—he who had been one of a four-hundred-strong flock. The fact immersed him literally, as if he were falling into a gulf, making him cry out, without knowing it, before he thought. All round him "the great spaces washed with sun" were deserted and clear, and, only very far away, he caught, with his large and wonderful bulging eyes, the faint splashes of silver against the pure, clean-swept green of fields that marked the twisting in their turns on their course of some few of his scattered campanions. Far away and below, and right out on the horizon, as it were a smoke puff caught up in a whirlwind, he at last made out the main body of the flock, "eating" leagues up and going nowhere, and changing from silver to dull drab on each swing and change of front.

Toward this he made. Toward this the scattered silver sparks, the far-flung units, were all making, one after the other, as they got their wits and found out really whither, in the immensity of the heavens, their subconscious selves had taken them.

But fact must have him labeled, anyway, alive or dead, and fact has it that he was a dunlin, whose other name is "ox-bird," though why "ox," the wild-fowlers who named him have never said; and, being themselves of a dying race, even if they now know, never will.

AS HE flung his way toward the flock, carving through the air sea—can we compare it to anything else, or, perhaps, can we compare it at all?—his knife-edge wings curved half back—part shut, it always seemed—folded a little to his side, so that men call them "hooked," tripping or slipping a little in his flight. That gave an odd trick of apparent uncertainty to so astonishing a flyer. The key-note whistles, the unmistakable "s-k-r-e-e" of the lost units, all heading in toward the flock from out the miles, all collecting, drawn by their wonderful sight to the common center of fellowship—any fellowship rather than none, since one beyond her vision of the flock, or wounded—"pricked," they delight to call it—had dropped to the company of five paddling redshanks—grew gradually upon his ears and almost made him happy.

Next instant, our dunlin—whose other name, for us at any rate, since he has to have one, was Alpina—fell incontinently into an air-pocket, or, rather, into a lower air stratum. He had passed from flying over the warm sandy shore, with its upthrust of rising warm air, to above the colder water with slower rising currents. Consequently, he fell. A four-hundred-feet drop without any effort to recover was no matter to him; he knew he could recover. It was like a dive. Shore-birds often dive when crossing from land to water—generally do, if not at a great height—and he had been descending on a long slant all the time. Now he did finally fetch up and start flying close along the surface of the water—his favorite method, for several reasons—toward the main flock.

But the main flock had vanished. It had sucked down like a waterspout—only down, not up—a wonderful funnel of living, fluttering silver confetti, and had promptly ceased to be. Instead, there was a bed of white crocuses planted out along a thin, narrow strip of dark, forbidding mud. In places the plants stood six deep; in places the bed thinned out to one thick. At the ends it tailed off and was lost as single plants that stopped. That was the flock, standing motionless, all facing one way—the way of the wind—white breasts toward him, all as still and unlifelike as the crocuses they resembled at that distance—a flock three hundred and eighty-two strong. The other eighteen had been killed or maimed beyond flying, beyond freedom, beyond hope, beyond count as birds, by the gun.

Alpina dashed up to them at full speed, with a last pleased whistle, spun wonderfully full about close above their heads, so as to face the wind, though he had come to them down-wind. He tilted his body and his wing-planes, so as to offer what aviators call as great an "angle of incidence" as possible, by way of brake, for he had heaps of speed to get rid of yet. He gave a few flaps to add to it, and stopped neatly into a vacant place—and it was hard to find one in that throng plotted out exactly at wing's length apart and no more—folded his wings and was still as the rest. None of them took any notice. Not a head moved, not a feather. They were all of them, or nearly all, alseep, with their heads tucked under their wings and their long beaks stuck among their feathers. Many were on one leg; many were not. Here and there, especially on the outside, a bird stood with its head sunk into its shoulders, but awake. One had its head and long neck right up—another "pricked" unfortunate, no doubt, reminded of danger by the bite of pain all the time and on the lookout for it.

Alpina was asleep almost with the last little waggle of his long wings, whose knife-points folded over his apology for a tail, and for ten minutes that flock became immovable crocuses once more, utterly lost

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in sleep—deep sleep, complete sleep—in the bright sun.

THE next that Alpina knew was waking and rising with the flock, which had risen because the birds that were already awake had risen; yet they had followed so instantly—from deep sleep to furious motion—that, to the mere human eye, it looked exactly like the action of a machine of which all component parts had acted precisely together.

As Alpina swept into the flock along the mud-spur to the end, then turned and swept back, again reversed and back again, going further each time, covering yards in instants at furious speed, yet each pointed wing-tip only just so far from the next bird's as to give flying-room and no more—the baffling wind now ahead, now astern as they turned, and now abeam, the air-currents pushing and shoving this way and that—he could hear the sound of the united wing-rush like rain on leaves of forest trees.

And then he was down and asleep again, still in his place, beautifully unconscious of any miracle accomplished, unworried—a machine, and part of a greater—a one three-hundred-and-eighty-second part of a greater—the machine of the flock.

The alarm had been a false one. Nothing had made it; nothing justified it. There was nothing, there in all the far landscape, to account for it. It had come, sprung to furious speed, and snapped to inert sleep again—from nowhere.

Three times this happened, Alpina, with the flock, getting from five to fifteen minutes' sleep each time, but always the same rigid routine was adhered to, the same speed, the same preinstantaneousness, the same mathematical precision, the same immaculate discipline. Each or any time the alarm might have been real. The flock knew that. As one bird, or three hundred and eighty-two, they were fully aware, nor lost in any of the alarms one iota of their care, pace and exactness. Men said there was a leader whom all followed; but if there was, no man of life could pick him out. No bird seemed before his or her fellow, or behind.

The fourth time Alpina was up and a part and parcel of the rest, it was different. There was something in the "feel" of the flock that told him this. You know how, without a word being spoken, panic runs through a crowd? So here, then, he caught the cold grip of fear as it ran like an invisible electric current through his fellows. And he looked and saw above them, so high it was but the size of a fly, a bird thing climbing in circles. Then it fell.

Alpina was conscious of a long, thin, hissing line drawn from heaven to earth, or, rather, mud. Perhaps he had time to hope that streak, which was a falcon who rejoiced in the name of Hobby, whose other name was Death, was aimed at any and every other member of that flock but him. It was not. No, sirs! From way up in the infinite that hunter with a hooked bill had picked him out, and the next second he was quite wise as to the fact.

He had just time to turn over on one wing and stumble like that a foot and let the terror go whistling by. If she—for a she it was—had hit him at that speed, there would have been no more to him—at least, no more worth counting.

If she had hit the mud, there would have been no more to *her!*

Neither happened.

He had his feathers ruffled by the draft of her passage. She shot out her great wings and fanned her tail, braking madly, and came round and was up again almost before he had got a fair start.

Promptly he became a speck in the sky, as if he would climb to heaven's gate. Promptly she followed him.

He saw the estuary lay itself out like a burnished tea-tray. He saw the roads like little white ribbons. He saw the motor-cars on the roads, and the horses and the carts like tiny toy things stuck there. He saw a pinch of cotton-wool—that was steam—above a toy train that crawled and crawled. He saw a little toy town—all so orderly laid out and clean—with red roofs and a pond.

Then all this was blotted out, and became bank upon bank of gauzy, sliding cloud.

If he could only lose her in this, her the sickle-winged minion of death! But she was beastly close now, having come up, shooting through the cloud-drift, like a fish out of surf. He wouldn't give a feather for his chances up here if she got above him, and in spite of all his straining, she was going up past him now. She could swoop, cut off his life and catch him again as he fell, before he went to pieces on the earth below.

No; he could see that his chances up here were no sort of healthy investment. But he was not a dunlin to throw up his wings and surrender for nothing. He was old and cunning, as they count both in dunlin society, and he guessed anybody could fall—if they could not fly—as quickly as anybody else; so he fell. Shut his wings and let himself go.

It was sickening, that awful slide down, faster and faster and faster, through the hurrying piled nothing of the clouds—pash! Surely he must have felt as if the bottom of his stomach had vanished in those crazy seconds.

Whrrp! And the clouds had flashed up by him.

Whrrr-ewhh! And the neat, clean, washen, clipped and shaven dolls' toy-land of old Mother Earth was tearing up toward him at the rate of a runaway train. It was she that was nearing, not he. He felt that. And just behind—two yards, to be exact—the hobby-falcon was shooting, as if she had been tied to him by a string. That appalling dive was turning him giddy.

ONE does not know whether, with his prism-binocular eyes, Alpina had already marked down his landing-place. It seemed impossible from that height and at that speed. His subsequent maneuvers appeared to suggest that it was not. Anyway, if he made up his mind at the last, then he must have had a wonderful mind, timed, like a camera-shutter, to fractions of seconds.

Be this as it may, the world, in flying up to him as if he were hardly moving at all, showed that he was over the land, and making, on a sharp slant that wasn't quite a clean drop, on a bee-line—or far straighter, for a real bee-line isn't very straight—slap-bang toward a house close to the water. And the next thing one knew was that two streaks had come down out of the sky, and that one had ended—miraculously, without pulverizing itself—in the porch at the front door of that house. That one was Alpina, crouched, cowering, and panting as if his heart would blow up. The other was the falcon, who swept on on a long, curving swerve, her wings and tail cut, and disgust and rage written all over her.

However, Alpina was there, and had not the slightest intention of being anywhere else for a bit. The falcon—who, by the way, was about the fastest bird that flies—could beat up and down, light as a butterfly, in the sky if she liked. Alpina was not going to quit station for quite some interval for any— Oh, help!

The door opened, and a man stood in the gap where it had been.

Alpina did not move, even though the telltale gleam of two gun-barrels under his arm quite invited him to do so. Like Br'er Rabbit, he just sat tight, staring and panting.

The man paused to light a cigarette and stepped out. His nailed boot fell within six inches of the crouched dunlin, and—my!—but that must have been one of the worst moments in the little bird's hectic life. Not that he showed it, mark you. He might have been on his nest by the pose of him, as impassive as an Oriental.

The hobby-falcon fled, conscious, maybe, that the sudden barlike gleam at the man's shoulder indicated that the gun-barrels had been leveled at her but did not speak because she was too far away. And she kept far away. In fact, she must have been pretty well on the other side of the English Channel by the time that man came home again; for she was traveling, you see, to Africa, where she wintered, not liking the British climate except to nest in.

Ten minutes later, Alpina made his début from that porch and headed away for the estuary—nobody being a scrap the wiser from first to last, which comes of keeping still, my sons. Do you freeze and think hard when you are in a fix.

But—mark you—Alpina was not happy yet—not by a beakful. For these long-legged, paddling little shore-birds, life may be happy, but at a price only.

For one thing, there was no longer the flock of dunlin to be found. That falcon had scared the cheek out of 'em more than the gun had, and they were not chancing meeting her again. Wherefore, Alpina, flying forlornly over the again deserted, wind-whipped mud-flats, whistling: "S-k-r-e-e! S-k-r-e-e!" at ten-second intervals, could find nothing better to associate with than five-ringed plover, with white waistcoats and black stocks, feeding round a gully. It was characteristic of him, and of most shore-birds, that he must hobnob with somebody.

At that time—and indeed, at all times pretty well, it seems to me—the worrying, blustering, chilly wind of the estuary was blowing hard—quite hard enough. Alpina, hugging the mud because of it, let himself down into the gully and settled with a friendly twitter before he noticed that the ringed plover were not altogether happy.

True enough, they were running about, or pausing to listen rigidly for the lobworm or the sandhoppers. We might think they were really feeding. Alpina *knew* they were only kidding. Reason—a big pearl-gray and speckless white herring-gull, stuck like a marble carving on the mud forty yards away, looking at nothing in particular. You could have seen him a mile off, shining like a gravestone. But he didn't care. He was planning to be a gravestone, or, more correctly, a grave, for one of the ringed plovers. But Alpina would do just as well.

Alpina knew the gull—the horrible, hated "white patrol" of the estuaries and coasts, knew his gentle little ways with such as find themselves tired, lost, deserted, wounded or alone. And Alpina fled, the gull after him, like a splash of white paint.

That chase was different from the last. It never went very high. It often almost touched the mud, and between those two it drew a course like the lines on a fever-chart—and a very feverish fever-chart at that. Speed? I don't know. Just as fast as one could follow, and that isn't slow.

For an overplaned flying craft such as he was, that gull put in some wonderfully tricky flying curves and loops, dives and glides. He made great play with the wind eddies, but, for all his power, got himself badly blown up once on an up-draft, and badly let into a pocket—the pair of them—which ended in Alpina "shrinking coyly up a drain," or, to be more exact, what the natives call a "bunny"—one of those drains, or sluices, which run the surface-water off the land out into the estuary.

And here, close by, the beastly gull stuck himself up as a gravestone once more. He was no impetuous falcon to lose patience. He was a gull—that is, one of the most patient things in all the wild, and almost the cruelest.

And the mud-bedraggled dunlin in the bunny had to stop where he was till darkness smote the shore, for come out he dared not and face that skulking murderer's beak.

NIGHT added itself to the wind, and the gull departed to sleep among his fellows at some distant goodness knows where. Other things, too, were added to the night, worse even than the gull.

Shore-crabs, who are never very far away from you on the shore or the estuary, though you may not see them, came to the conclusion that now, perhaps, would be a good time to tear that dunlin to pieces—fighting each other all the while—since he had remained so still that he must be dead, or wounded—they didn't care which.

Shore-rats, almost as horrible as the crabs, came and stared up the bunny with little eyes of green, like gimlet-holes of light in the gathering gloom.

Outside, the dunlin could hear the harsh dungeon-echoing "cr-a-a-nk!" of a heron, and the lost-soul wail of a curlew. Far away, a peewit, or green plover, set up a clamor and was still. The great clock on the town hall in the distant seaport city began to boom slowly out the hour, and a vessel, probably a torpedo-boat destroyer, feeling her way into harbor, set up a sudden hyenalike howl.

Save for these things, there was no sound except, from time to time, the horrible click of the horny carapace of some crab against a stone or the clatter of pebbles as a rat ran.

And it was then that Alpina, cramped and none too warm, decided that now was the time to go.

He went accordingly, but not far. To be precise, he went about a dozen inches, and then, stopping as if some one had him by a string, set up a sudden wild and maniacal fluttering that seemed as if it would knock the life out of him. But with all the crazy beating, he did not get any farther.

The fact of the matter was that eels congregated about the mouth of that bunny, but, though they were capable of any villainy, it was not eels that had got him. It was the hook, one of the hooks, on the line—"trot-line" the natives term it, I fancy—set by some local fisherman to entertain—and retain—some of those eels that had got him.

It had him just under the arm—or, rather, wing-pit, so to say, and did not seem in the least inclined to let him go. Hence the unreasoning madness.

For all wild creatures, the fear of the trap—the terror of the loss of freedom—is bad enough, but for a shore-bird—a wader, a dunlin, one who had been used to "make of the seas a hostel and of the skies a market-place," and whose wings carried him half round the world and more—yearly—this awful holding and not letting go sent him into a blind nightmare of horror that seemed in danger of forcing him to commit suicide by insane, senseless struggling alone, then and there.

And instantly the rats and the crabs, the shore-gentry, the ghouls, the hyenas of the tide-line were still—at attention. They heard the fluttering, the unmistakable signal of distress, and they dealt in distress, as a butcher deals in meat—only, by no means so neatly.

In fact, there was a long pause all round the bunny in the stillness. One felt rather than saw that there were things in the darkness listening, or, at any rate, conscious of the accident, horrible things, and one would not have liked to change places with that poor bird for—well, for any mortal thing. And no one, you bet, knew—once he had realized more or less what had hold of him, which he did not do at once—better than Alpina the full, merciless, sickening horror of his position.

THEN came the horrible, slow closing-in process. It always comes in the wild, sooner or later, round a trapped or a wounded thing, and is one of the most pitiless attributes to a life where war never ceases from birth till death. The strongest and the fortunate must live to make an already efficient race always more efficient; the weakest or the unfortunate must die, so as not for one moment to impair that racial efficiency. And so the terrible *væ victis* is sounded, and the foes close in.

Alpina must have heard it, even if he did not already know. He had seen two wounded redshanks plucked nearly naked within fifteen minutes of their mishap by crabs or gulls the day before, and he knew that he had already been given by fate more than his time-limit.

He fell to beating and struggling even more violently and shockingly than before. Something must give way. He fully intended that something should, and at the moment he was not in a state of mind to care much what.

The rats, fortunately, were a little delayed by the crabs, and vice versa, for it is not recognized outside the wild what, with food ahead and on his own ground, a very insolent fighter the shore-crab is. The rats, though they eat them, were perfectly wise as to this, and placed each foot warily because of it.

Meanwhile, Alpina went, apparently, quite mad.

He saw the gimlet-hole, gleaming eyes. He heard the click of stones. He became beyond reasoning. He tugged as they tug who are consumed with liquid fire, and—snap!

Something had given way. It was not the hook; he could *feel* that. Away—away—away, was the one consuming surge of his brain, away out of this!

He fell on his beak at the sudden release. He was up, quick as light, as a rat rushed in. He was going down the beach, part running, part flying, part dancing, part hopping mighty hops—somehow, anyhow, to get away.

Things grabbed at his toes in the dark; jaws snapped at his flanks; claws felt after his tail. Creatures unseen fell over one another in their famished rage to get at him and tear, to do anything to stop his retreat. And he, who had no weapons beyond a soft beak, designed for the finest possible delicacy of touch, had nothing to fight them with—only his long legs and his narrow sickle-wings to flee. He fled.

And it was not till he was far out across the estuary, still part flying, part skipping along in that grotesque and awful nightmare dance, before he realized that a weighted, horrible something was holding him back.

It was at this moment that he made the discovery that he had carried away part of the line with him. I don't know what he thought it was, of course—probably a bit of seaweed—but it hurt; the hook got in the way of his wing when flying, and he was very miserable indeed. Moreover, he was alone, and that, to him, was almost the worst of all.

Wherefore, he naturally began to talk about it, calling out to the damp night in his thin, harsh whistle, and complaining, to all

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who cared to hear in the immense empty space, of his misery.

"S-k-r-e-e! S-k-r-e-e!" he piped, and then instantly jumped to attention.

"S-k-r-e-e! S-k-r-e-e!" came an answering whistle across the wet mud-ooze.

He nearly went crazy in his excitement of answering. He flapped as well as he could toward the sound, singing out all the time, till—oh, joy!—he heard the swift whimper of wings above and round him, and a pleased, exulting whistle. It was his mate. She—she, the little faithful one, she had never lost hope, never forgotten, but had searched the mud-flats day and dark, calling all the time for him, leaving the flock to do so, and you cannot comprehend, perhaps, all the wrench that that means to a dunlin.

She settled hastily beside him and ran round him, twittering. He uttered a curious little yodling whistle of pleasure to greet her, and, in the same instant, he heard a sound rush by overhead, as of the passing of a summer rain-shower over forest trees. He did not want telling what that sound was. It was, though he could not see it, beyond a hurrying blur across the blue-black of the night sky—it was the flock.

At once his wife rose to follow them, calling to him to follow her. And he did, but it was hard work. The hook pricked confoundedly, and the line *would* get in the way. He made slow flying of it, and presently settled again, calling dismally, for he did not want to be left *now*—that would be too hard.

Once more—and I like to think of her then—his mate came back to him and lighted close by his side. She seemed puzzled and upset, twittering at him continuously and excitedly, as if in those twitters she could ask of him the trouble—for she knew there was trouble. She could see that, at any rate. You could tell it by her actions. Indeed, most wild creatures show trouble so obviously that none could remain in doubt, and this is especially so with birds, who reveal it in their immobility.

And then it was, as he ran forward a little, and rose and flew a few yards and again gave it up, that she seemed to see for the first time that pestilential fishing-line. She flew to him and picked it up in her beak. I don't know why. You may, or may not, doubt whether she knew. Nor does it matter very much, since neither of us is likely to find out.

But the point was that, for the moment, she prevented him from feeling it, and in the same moment, the rush of the flock, as it went tearing by on its sweeping maneuvers, came to them out of the night.

The two together were too much for Alpina. He became delirious almost with that feeling we can only describe as the "call of the flock," and gathering every ounce of strength that he possessed, he rose and flew with all the power that was in him.

The result was extraordinary.

He had covered perhaps a hundred yards, flying very low, but working up to almost a mad speed of reckless desperation when suddenly the hook on the end of the line caught in an old and tottering green and rotting stump. It stopped him dead in full wild career, turning him clean over in the air and dropping him as if he had been shot. It was an awful jar.

Alpina's mate swept back, calling, calling, calling, but from him there was no answer. He lay still and limp upon the mud—she found him—a dead thing, apparently, and the crabs would come into their own at last having the final word, as they always do.

Wildly she ran round him, twittering coaxingly. Vainly she ran a little way off, calling him to rise, but it was all no good. The bunch of feathers, with white breast uppermost, so conspicuous and so inert there in the dark, would apparently fly nevermore.

And then at last, she rose and began to fly away after the flock, calling dolefully as she went, and instantly, as if the call had roused him, Alpina stood up and shook himself. Then he rose, too, and swiftly followed her.

He had only been stunned, after all, by the jerk, which had, in addition, wrenched the hook out of his body, leaving him a free bird once more, with only a superficial flesh-wound that would quickly heal.

TO-DAY, if we look for him, we shall find him with his mate and the flock somewhere upon the great *marismas* in Spain, I think, and, if the imperial eagles and the marsh-harriers and the peregrine falcons and the rest don't go too far, we shall have him back here again with us next spring, on his way north to nest.

A Story of Paris, City of Contrasts

The Pointed Tower

The First Rays of Light Seem to Be Shed Upon the de Granlieu Mystery, but Mr. Guelpa, Hard at Work, Continues to Find Much That is Puzzling

By Vance Thompson

Illustrations by Gerald Leake

Begin this serial with any instalment. The story is here up to this issue.

THE Comtesse de Granlieu was under observation—suspected of the murder of her husband—although she did not know it. Among her servants, the police had found the necessary collaborators—that maid who brushed out her hair at night and put on her stockings in the morning, the chauffeur who drove her car, the man on the door, the old butler at table—one and all, with the keen interest servants find in taking the upper hand of those they serve, watched her, spied on her, reported on her. The *Sûreté*—the crime-hunters of Paris—had made up its mind. The killing of the Comte de Granlieu, whose body had been found in the Bois de Boulogne, was a passional crime. *Cherchez la femme;* and the *Sûreté* had sought the woman—and found the Comtesse de Granlieu.

At times, she thought she was watched; at times, she did not know. Only, round her, she felt, was an atmosphere of suspicion and espial; she was afraid.

She had made many advances to her father-in-law, the Marquis de Granlieu, and to the old *marquise;* there had come from them only vague, cold answers of politeness. She had asked them if she might call at their home. The reply had been an excuse—ill health, sorrow.

The friends of the great family—and some of them had been friends of her own—followed this example of polite frigidity. Cards were left, but no one came. She had no friends in the American set; the count had not opened his doors to them, and the few friends she might have had in her earlier days in Paris had been alienated. She was environed with loneliness and fear. Almost the only person she saw was her lawyer, John Faynis. He was an old-time sweetheart, in the days back in New York, before her ambitious father had arranged her marriage with the scion of one of the great families of France. And now he had come to Paris on matters connected with the settlement of her father's estate—and had arrived the very day of the count's death. Faynis she saw every day. He came in the morning; sometimes he came in the afternoon and they drove in a closed car in the Bois; but always he came.

"I can't endure it, John," she said. 'I want to go home at once." "Home" was New York.

"I think we had better wait," Faynis replied.

It was his belief that they must wait. He was an observant man. It was his business in life, and those half-shut eyes of his saw nearly everything that was taking place. He had seen quiet watchers in the avenue; he knew that wherever they went they were followed by shadowy things that never let them go. Gladly he would have caught her up and carried her off in the first boat that sailed had he not been sure that she would never have been permitted to step aboard. He was angry at this vague persecution. He was angry, because, as yet, it was so vague he could find no way of meeting it. It was evident the police suspected her of having taken some part in the death of her husband—but what part? Until they came out in the open and made some charge of complicity, for he thought that was what they had in mind, there was nothing he could do. He did not talk about it with her. It would have seemed monstrous to suggest to her what he knew was in the dark police mind. Had she surmised it? He looked at her crouching in the big chair by the window in the small *salon*. She was pale, and there were shadows under her eyes. It was not only distress he read in her face—there was suspense there, a fearful expectancy. His heart was filled with a great tenderness. He went and stood over her and stroked her hair. Then he bent and kissed her—for the first time in many years. He remembered the last time he had kissed her—long ago. It was in the drawing-room in the great mansion in Fifth Avenue, when he was a boy and she but a girl, and they dreamed their short dream of love—their dream of marriage and deathless happiness. Old Ryle had put an end to that. He did not look upon marriage as part of a rosy story of youth and love. To his mind it was as practical as an operation in Wall Street; so he tore up their pretty romance and summoned from overseas the golden count who was to give Eva Ryle a title—and many other things. And of all this John Faynis thought, as he bent over and kissed her gently on the forehead. She must not sit there hour after hour with her fear, he told himself; better do something—no matter what.

"Little friend," he said at last, "this won't do. There are many things to be settled before you can go home. We're neglecting business."

"Yes," she replied, rousing herself and smiling up into his face—it was as though she had come out of a cloud—"what is it?"

"That jeweler fellow—whatever his name is—ah, Dufrène—is back in town at last. I telephoned just before I came, and he is at his place in the Rue de la Paix now. I have the money for him here in my pocket. I thought bank-notes were better than a check, so I drew four hundred thousand francs in money. You want him reimbursed for his loss of the jewels, of course, and the sooner the better."

"We'll go now," said Eva. She rose—not with the old blithe alacrity. "Will you ring, John? I'm glad to have something to do."

THE office and reception-rooms of Dufrène, the eminent dealer in precious stones, were on the first floor and looked out on the Rue de la Paix. The Comtesse de Granlieu and Faynis went up the short pair of stairs covered with velvet and were admitted by a soft old man in livery. The room into which they were shown was furnished as a *salon*, but in the center was a small table covered with baize; on it lay squares of black velvet, lenses and tiny metal pincers and strips of metal with graded holes. There was not much light, for the curtains at the windows were partly drawn. They waited a little while before Dufrène entered.

He was a lean-bodied man, neither young nor old, buttoned up in a smartly cut morning coat; he had scanty hair, a distrustful eye and a thin-lipped mouth. For so many years he had rubbed himself against the nobility and gentry that he had acquired a kind of polish. Perhaps his manners were just a trifle too good; he gave the impression of wanting to please, of being too elaborately polite. That apart, Mr. Dufrène was more than presentable. He bowed to the countess and then to Faynis. It was the latter who spoke, explaining that he was her legal and financial adviser.

"I have tried to see you many times," he added.

"I have been out of town," Dufrène said; his voice was rather pleasant.

"The countess has been extremely anxious that I should see you and settle this unfortunate affair of the tiara you were so good as to lend her. You advanced the late Comte de Granlieu a certain amount of money on it, I believe, and the countess is ready to repay you."

"The money instead of the jewels?" Dufrène asked. His distrustful eyes glanced from one to the other.

"You have a memorandum of your transaction with the count?"

"I have his acknowledgment—this is it."

"I see. And in exchange for it," said Faynis, "I will give you four hundred thousand francs."

He laid the money, which was in four packages, on the table near which Dufrène had remained standing since he had entered the room.

"Am I entitled to do that?" the jeweler inquired, after a slight pause. "The jewels were entrusted to me by the count himself. I was only too glad to have an opportunity of obliging the Comtesse de Granlieu by lending her the jewels to wear at a ball, but under the sad circumstances which have risen, may I not have to account to the count's family for the tiara itself? Of course you can repay what the count borrowed——"

"You need have no hesitation, Mr. Dufrène. The tiara belonged to the countess—it was a wedding-gift to her from the family."

"Tell Mr. Dufrène about—" Before Eva could finish the sentence, Faynis interrupted her.

"There can be no question," he said quickly. "The money belongs to you, Mr. Dufrène—anything else is a matter for the family."

Dufrène made no further protest, though it was with an air of distrust—perhaps habitual—that he gave up the paper and, taking the money, placed it in a drawer of the table. Both he and Faynis were standing. Eva, black-coated, black-veiled, was seated in a large chair, her back to the door. Save for the one interruption when she had asked John Faynis to tell something, she had not spoken except to greet the jeweler when he first came in. Now she thanked him and told him how grateful she was for all that he had done.

"It is my business," he replied, "to try to oblige my clients."

Faynis, too, thanked him, but before he had finished there was a slight knock at the door and the servant in livery entered. He was followed by the Marquis de Granlieu, who walked with difficulty, leaning on a stick, and by a man whom Dufrène did not know. Therefore it was at this man he looked; and his distrustful eyes saw a cold, hard face, lips as thin as his own and iron-gray eyes.

"Ah, Dufrène!" said the marquis. "How do you do? This is Mr. Meunier. He is a magistrate and will tell you what he wants. Eh—you are not alone?" he added, glancing round the dim room and seeing Faynis, who had gone toward Eva. "I think I have seen this gentleman before."

IT WAS the only recognition he gave Faynis, but, looking beyond him, he saw the small figure in black garments sitting in the big chair and, with only a slight start of surprise, went slowly toward her.

"How do you do, Eva?" he said calmly, and took her gloved hand and made a pretense of kissing it—though his old lips were never within six inches of the glove—and, turning, he added, perhaps to Mr. Meunier, "The Comtesse de Granlieu." Then, with slow, painful steps, he crossed the floor and took a seat near the table.

Faynis was unruffled by the cool impertinence with which the marquis had treated him, but since Eva had been named—why, he did not know—in that public way, he determined to let it be known that she was not alone. So he said quietly:

"And I am here with the Comtesse de Granlieu. I am Mr. Faynis, of New York, her legal adviser and a trustee of her estate."

Mr. Meunier listened politely to this statement and then bowed slightly, as though it had been addressed to him. They were all standing save Eva and the old marquis, who sat near the table.

"It is very dark in here," the magistrate said.

Mr. Dufrène touched a button and lit a powerful electric lamp which threw its rays directly on the center of the table.

"That is better," said Mr. Meunier. "I want you to look at something—of course, I know you, Mr. Dufrène, as a great expert in jewels. Do you know this one?"

He laid on one of the squares of black velvet a great flat diamond that drank the light and gleamed and pulsated like some uncanny living thing. It was the diamond over which an old Jew in the Rue de Provence had rocked and moaned with avaricious joy; it was the diamond Viola had sold for the paltry sum of five thousand francs, and escaped—with the money in her stocking; it was the diamond—could one but have known it—the history of which, back through a thousand years, was one of blood and crime, of murdered men and women bought and sold—but that is the history of every great diamond, Mr. Dufrène would have said.

"I know it, of course," the jeweler replied calmly. "I have known it, as the Marquis de Granlieu can inform you, for over thirty years. It has been in my hands many times. I know it as well as a father knows his son. It is the Granlieu diamond, and formed part of the tiara of the Comtesse de Granlieu."

"My tiara!" Eva came forward quickly. She threw back her veil and bent over the diamond.

"Yes," she said; "it is mine."

The men were silent. It seemed to her they were all staring at her—that the room was full of eyes—distrustful eyes, iron-gray, inimical eyes, faded old eyes full of malice; and she turned for comfort to Faynis.

"Of course it is mine," she repeated less resolutely.

"There is no doubt, then," the marquis said. "It is a well-known jewel, and it belongs to the de Granlieu tiara. I had already told you so, Mr. Meunier."

"Of course; but it is well to have the confirmation of an expert—and of the Comtesse de Granlieu. And the tiara, Countess—the rest of it is in your possession, I presume?"

"No; I haven't it. My husband took it."

There was nothing she would say to them, Mr. Meunier was confident, which she had not said to Mr. Guelpa; and the report of that conversation with her and Faynis he knew by heart, but he wanted to hear the words from her own lips.

"We know that," he said. "He took it over two months ago and pledged it with Mr. Dufrène."

"Not that time," interposed Eva. "I mean another time."

Faynis brought forward a chair and she sat down near the table in the brilliant light; she was pale and frightened.

"I think you wore the tiara at the Dubrowski's ball," the marquis remarked quietly.

"Yes; I borrowed it from Mr. Dufrène. He trusted me with it, for I did not have the money then to repay him what he had given my husband. So I wore it at the ball that night."

"And returned it?"

"I could not return it. It was taken from me that same night—by my husband. He entered the house without my knowledge. He came to my room and took the tiara."

The Marquis de Granlieu started forward indignantly, but Mr. Meunier interposed.

"Please continue, Countess—tell us the whole story."

SHE related in detail how the Comte de Granlieu had taken the jewels and pledged them; how they had quarreled and separated, and the count had betaken himself to a bachelor apartment in the Rue Boissy-d'Anglas; how, having borrowed the tiara from Mr. Dufrène, she had worn it at the ball—where she had met the count; how after the ball he had entered the house with his pass-key and taken the tiara from her bedroom; how she was in honor bound to return it at once to the jeweler and, in her great anxiety to recover it, had visited the count's apartment and begged him to give it up to her."

"You were in his apartment?" asked Mr. Meunier. "That was the night of his death?"

"Yes."

"Of course," the magistrate acquiesced, "you called there."

"Yes."

"And that other night? The night of the ball? It was late when the count went to your chamber and took the tiara?"

"Very late."

"The servants did not see him?"

"No one saw him."

"You did not summon any one?"

"No."

"Then you alone knew that he was there—only you?"

"It must be so. No one saw him. He had his key."

"Of course. And then—the night you visited his apartment? He refused to give you the tiara?"

"He said it was gone. He had sold it or pledged it again."

Question after question Eva had answered steadily and quietly without looking up; but Faynis could see the immense effort she was making to maintain her self-control. He had stood motionless at the side of her chair, watching, weighing every question. Now he took a step forward and said:

"Permit me—one moment. When the countess found the tiara had been disposed of by the Comte de Granlieu, she instructed me to pay the amount Mr. Dufrène advanced on it two months or so ago. The tiara was her property—notoriously hers. It was presented to her on her wedding-day. Without her knowledge or consent, it was pledged for a sum of money, which I have paid back. According to the terms of the agreement, which I have here, the loan was to run for one year. There was no reason why it should have been repaid at present, if it had been possible to place the tiara once more in Mr. Dufrène's possession. But as the countess has been robbed of the tiara——"

The marquis struggled to his feet, shaking with anger.

"Robbed!" he exclaimed. "You dare to say——"

"Since the jewels were taken at night from her bedroom by some one who had no right to their possession," Faynis went on, unheeding the interruption, "she authorized me to pay Mr. Dufrène. I have just done so. I hold his receipt for four hundred thousand francs."

Mr. Meunier listened attentively.

"Quite so. I am very much obliged for your statement. Everything seems to be quite clear." He got up as though to go; then suddenly he approached the chair where Eva was sitting and bent down a little, staring in her face. "So you went to your husband's flat the night of his death? Did you go in your own car? No—of course not; you went in a taxi?"

"Yes."

"But when you left the flat—when you and your husband left together—you went in a motor-car. It was not his car?"

"I do not know."

"It was not yours?"

"No."

"And the chauffeur? You knew him?"

"I did not notice him. I don't know."

"An unknown car, an unknown driver—and you and the Comte de Granlieu——"

"May I ask what you mean?" Faynis interrupted sharply.

"I mean that I have found the car and the man who drove it, and the price of that diamond," he pointed to the table, "was in his pocket when he was arrested. The diamond was his pay for that night's work; and that night's work was murder!"

He almost shouted the words; his voice was harsh and metallic, and Eva shuddered. She turned imploringly to Faynis.

"It's all right, Eva," he said gravely, and he laid a protective hand on her shoulder.

Mr. Meunier watched this little scene, a grim smile on his thin lips. He made no remark, but he turned to the Marquis de Granlieu and their eyes met.

"HOW is your prisoner?" Mr. Guelpa, the famous criminologist, asked. He was talking to Inspector Rossignol, of the *Sûreté*, in the courtyard of the Pointed Tower, and in front of them was a big motor-car with a scarred tire. The prisoner he referred to was Heldon, chauffeur for one Jandel, arrested the day before by Rossignol in a motor-car with a scarred tire. And Mr. Guelpa, who had been employed by the count's father to clear the dead man's name of the taint of suicide, had discovered marks of a scarred tire in the road close to where the count's body had been found.

"Sulky," replied the inspector. "But I am taming him with tobacco. Sooner or later he'll talk—they all do."

"Almost all of them do, and that's a fortunate thing for honest folk," said Mr. Guelpa, "for, in spite of science, juries are still reluctant to cut off the head of a silent man. They like a confession; though, as a matter of fact, a confession proves nothing at all. Thousands of men have accused themselves of a crime they never committed, perhaps out of a false sense of honor, perhaps to save some one else. You can never tell. Your hard-handed policeman has terrorized more than one poor devil into getting himself guillotined—starved, beaten, bullied, he has preferred the guillotine to one of your cells. A confession is often worthless unless it is confirmed by technical proofs. Let your sulky prisoner alone, Rossignol. For a pint of brandy and a cigar he'll say anything you want him to say, but what would it prove?"

"I'm not spoiling him to that degree," said Rossignol, laughing.

"It is only the dumb witnesses who do not lie," Mr. Guelpa went on, repeating one of his favorite aphorisms. "If I had been able to examine the revolver which was found by the count's body before it was pawed over by a dozen hands, I should know nearly all I want to know. But always something remains. Matter is like a sensitive plate, so far as taking impressions is concerned; but once it gets an impression it keeps it forever—and even after it has crumbled into dust you will find traces. Dust is curious, Rossignol, very curious. It is crumbled-up matter and never loses the mark of its origin."

Bland and dainty, smoking a cigarette, his little hat on the side of his head, Mr. Guelpa talked away as though he had no object in life but the education of the truculent little inspector, but all the while he was studying the captured automobile with the scarred tire.

"You've searched the car, of course, Rossignol?"

"A dozen of us have been over it."

"Which means that a dozen of you have left your marks there."

"Well, there was a pretty lively fight in that car, Mr. Guelpa, before we got our man tied up; a good many of us left our marks on it—and on him."

"Ah—that is the way the glass was broken?"

"There wasn't any glass broken."

"Good! And yet that glass was put in very recently. And it was not a good job—it was a hasty job. The varnish is wrinkled and broken over the putty. You can see it from here."

The glass to which Mr. Guelpa referred was that in the rear wind-shield, which was now drawn up and fastened to the roof as in the old-fashioned French cars of that type.

"The glass must have been down when it was broken. Lower the shield, Rossignol."

When the wind-shield was lowered, it shut off the front seats of the car from the back; with the curtains drawn, it would have given the effect of a closed car. Mr. Guelpa sat down on the back seat.

"It was a hurried job," he said again; "the puttying of that glass was not a bad job—except for the varnish. A poor quality of varnish—it does not throw back the light. But you see more than that, Rossignol; I am sure you see a great deal more than that. I am not a tall man; at least I am not a very tall man."

"Neither of us is," replied the inspector.

"Just so. Therefore, as I sit here and look upward at the black wooden frame of the wind-shield, I see, because I am seeing it at an angle, a patch of dull-colored varnish—a poor quality of varnish, and new. And it has precisely the effect of the varnish applied to the putty which holds the new glass in place. Now, Rossignol, a touch of imagination—not too much—and when your imagination is alive, reason from analogy. There, on the wood, is a long, narrow strip of new varnish, in tone precisely like that on the new putty. The shield was down when the glass was broken. Good! It was down when that scar was made on the wood. Take your penknife, Rossignol—it will do—and dig out the putty—carefully. There may be a bullet.

There was not a bullet, but when the soft putty had been removed, a clear-cut groove in the hard wood showed where a bullet had passed.

"Of course!" said Mr. Guelpa.

He had taken off his hat, and sat nursing it on his knee; at last he said briskly:

"Raise the wind-shield a little—so—a third of the way—or a little less—that's it! Does it lock there? And now do you see the course the bullet took? I will get the photographs and measurements later. For the moment, I think I should like to have a talk with Mr. Meunier."

"Certainly you found something, sir."

"An indication—a hint."

"You know more about ladies than I do, Mr. Guelpa," said Rossignol.

"Well?"

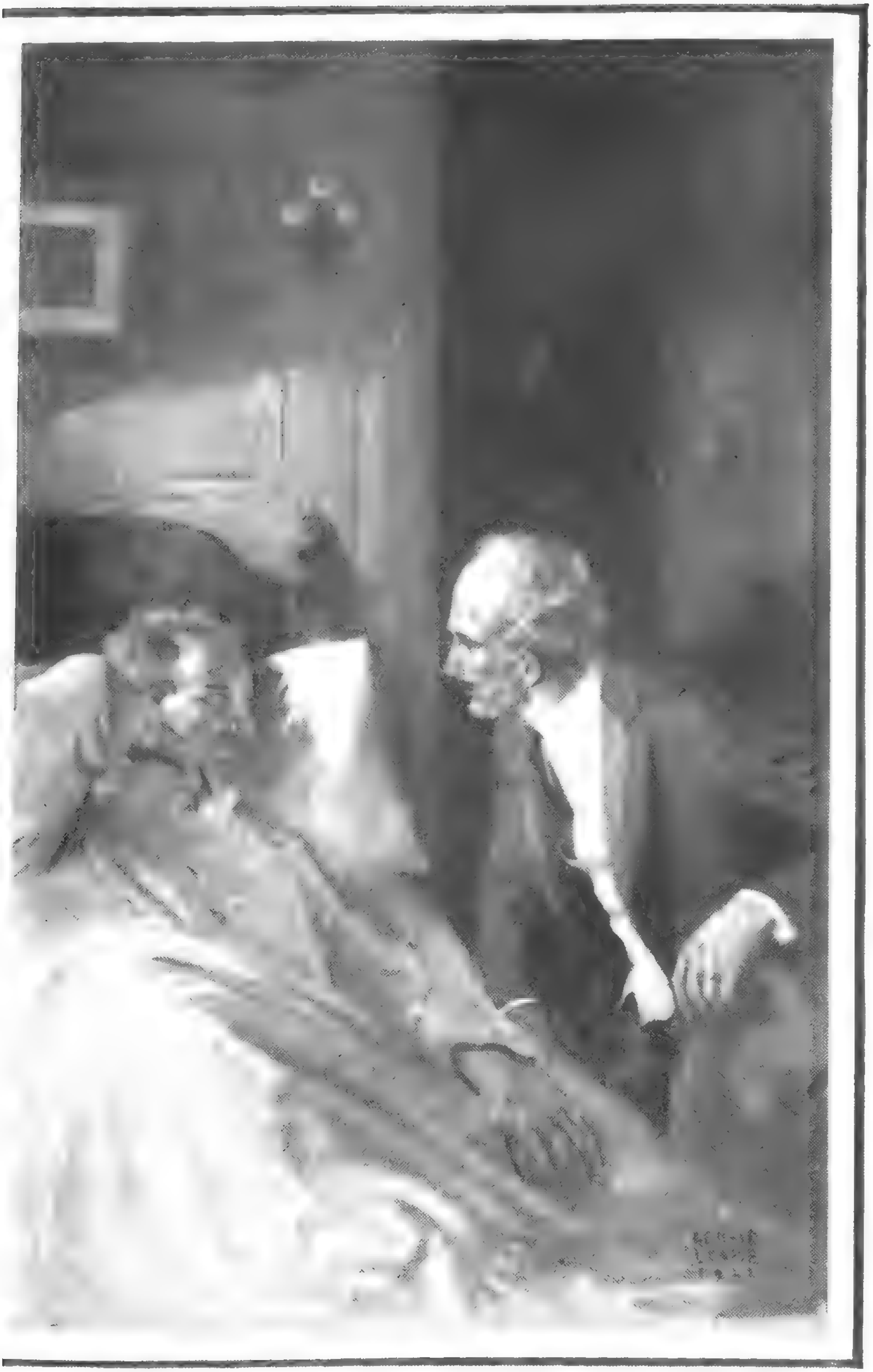
"A lady, I take it, sits on the right hand side of the car."

"You, too, Rossignol? Imagination is an excellent thing, but do not overwork it. Yes; I must see Meunier again.

HE FOUND the examining magistrate working with satisfaction at a statement of the Granlieu case; and Mr. Meunier's deductions were leading him to a very definite conclusion. He was glad to see Mr. Guelpa, for he was not quite sure how that eminent technician would look at the facts he had so carefully mustered.

"You have been getting on," said Mr. Guelpa, glancing at the signs of work on the magistrate's desk.

"Yes; it's clearing up—thanks, especially, to the admirable report you gave me on the actions of the countess the night of the crime. Ah, the women—the women!"



andel hesitated; with an almost involuntary movement his hand went to his neck. Finally he said: "An accident—I had an accident. It happened some time before."

"Quite so," Mr. Guelpa retorted. "And, ah, the men—the men! In fact, it is a mixed world. May I see your notes of the case?"

There were five pages written in the magistrate's square handwriting, and Mr. Guelpa read them slowly.

"Very strong. I presume, however, you are not going to take immediate action?"

"I am not quite ready to order her arrest. She is watched. There is not danger of her getting away. And the chances are, if she is free to go about, she may give us a few more indications. You noticed my point about the tiara?"

"It was a good point. There is another, too. Rossignol and I have been examining the motor-car. He is a good little man, Mr. Meunier, and I hope you will speak well of him in the proper quarters."

"And you found?"

"We found that the count—it is probable, at least—was killed in that car. We found the mark of one bullet. It was in the frame of the wind-shield. And the glass had been broken and a new one put in. I have sent Rossignol up to the garage. He will find out when those repairs were made and when the bullet-mark was puttied up and varnished over. He will find that all right, for some one knows about it."

"And who was in the car?" Mr. Meunier exclaimed, and his metallic eyes shone with triumph. "Three people were there, we know—Heldon, who drove the car from the count's apartment, the count—and one more, eh?—the Comtesse de Granlieu. Those three left the Rue Boissy-d'Anglas in that automobile. It was that automobile which left its mark at the Pool of Auteuil. And it left something else—the body of a murdered man. We owe a great deal to you, Mr. Guelpa, for the light you have thrown on this case."

"Have I thrown light on it? Perhaps. But, as you said, there is no haste about making an arrest. You will wait a day or so?"

"Yes; the countess is being followed—every step she takes. And there may be other accomplices. In fact, Guérin telephoned a few moments ago that she and her American had started on some new expedition—they are being shadowed now. So we'll wait. There is plenty of time before making an arrest that will startle two continents. It will be a famous case, Mr. Guelpa; and it is a chance in a lifetime."

He smiled, foreseeing for himself both fame and advancement in his career, and Mr. Guelpa nodded approval.

"Therefore you can afford to wait," he said.

PERHAPS he did not quite know why he deemed delay so advisable. The summary of the case he had just read was strong and convincing. He remembered it all, point by point, and word for word; and as he walked briskly over the bridge to the Latin Quarter, he analyzed it with some care. Flaws? There are always flaws in human reasoning, he told himself, but the examining magistrate had elaborated a statement which—granted the facts—was logical, at least. And thinking of these things, Mr. Guelpa turned into the Rue Gît-le-Cœur, where he lived. One look up and down the little street and he stood still in his tracks. At the top of the street, a motor-car was drawn up, half blocking the roadway; and men were idling to and fro, lounging in the doorways, staring into the windows of the shops. Mr. Guelpa recognized them well enough, for most of them, indeed, he knew—from Guérin to the lean inspector, Rigadin. But what interested him most was the evident fact that, although they permeated the entire street, yet their attention was given to one house. Now that house was Number Twelve. It was the house of Jules-Marie Guelpa, former director of the Technical Police Laboratory of Lyons.

"Tut, tut!" Mr. Guelpa said, smiling. "I hope Julie has not been indulging in crime."

Then solemnly, without looking to left or right or paying the slightest attention to the police pack, he walked to the house and went slowly up the steps. No one spoke to him. Even Guérin respected his unwonted air of solemnity. It was only when he was out of sight that Mr. Guelpa chuckled to himself.

"It would never do to let them imagine that I did not know all about it," he muttered. "But what the deuce is up now? I did not expect it of her."

And to Julie, who opened the inner door for him, he said pleasantly,

"How long has the Comtesse de Granlieu been here, Julie?"

"Oh, for a long time, fa-ther!"

"And the gentleman?"

"Yes, fa-ther!"

"I hope you have been nice to them."

"Well, mother is with them."

"Quite right."

"Yes, fa-ther."

"Look here, Julie; I wish you would stop bleating about my fatherhood every other word you say. Here—take my hat—and be careful of it."

JULIE took the hat in silence, hung it up and followed Mr. Guelpa to his study. The door was ajar; he pushed it and went in. The Comtesse de Granlieu, seated near the window, had been looking out into the street, but she turned as Mr. Guelpa entered, and Faynis stood up. There was a moment's silence. It was broken by Mrs. Guelpa saying,

"In your absence, dear, I thought it best to receive the countess here, since it is to consult you she has come."

"At my suggestion," said Faynis. "In fact, I insisted upon her coming to see you. I want to know where she stands before I take action myself." He added grimly, "Things can't go on like this."

"No?" Mr. Guelpa asked.

He looked at Mrs. Guelpa and opened the door for her.

"If you do not mind, Hortense—and take Julie with you."

"If there is any reason why we should not consult you—" Faynis began, when Mrs. Guelpa and her daughter were out of the room.

"There is none at all. I am quite at your service."

"Then what is the meaning of it? What am I to suspect?"

"You are a lawyer, Mr. Faynis? Doubtless you have had a good deal to do with evidence, and you know there is nothing so liable to distortion. When a witness tries to translate an idea into words, he nearly always deforms it—even a trained witness. Unconsciously, of course." Faynis moved impatiently, but it was at Eva Mr. Guelpa was looking. "You see? Testimonial errors are infinite. Few people can see things; fewer still can relate them. The evidence that comes from living lips is rarely accurate. This, of course, you know, Mr. Faynis. And now I am ready to answer your question. You wish the countess to hear my answer?"

Faynis hesitated.

"The countess wishes to hear everything. Evidently there is some mad suspicion——"

"No; not that—evidence! But you know what I think of evidence in general, and what I think of this evidence you may gather from my frankness. I do not say the *Sûreté* has blundered. It is a question of interpretation. And so, quite frankly, I will state the case which the *Sûreté* has built up against the Comtesse de Granlieu."

"Against me!"

Eva's voice was almost a whisper; she threw back her veil and stood up, holding on by the arm of the chair. Her face was white and horror-stricken.

"John," she cried, "did you hear?"

He forced her gently down into her seat and took one of her hands in his.

"Do not worry, Eva," he said. "You have me—and we both have Mr. Guelpa—it will all come right."

"But against me! What is against me?"

"Let Mr. Guelpa explain, dear."

"Of course the *Sûreté* has brought together many things in order to make a case. Many things," Mr. Guelpa repeated; "but what we want—if I am to help you—is the truth. You will note what I say, Mr. Faynis? In the first place, then, the relations between the Comte de Granlieu and his wife—your client—were not good. It is said there was another man in her life. Just a moment—do not interrupt me, please! She had even been betrothed to this man before she met the count. A boy-and-girl romance, perhaps. That man was you."

"Go on," said Faynis.

"After a quarrel, caused by the count's taking away her tiara and pledging it for a loan, she and the count separated. Owing to his prodigality, she was in great financial distress. She could not redeem the tiara, but she borrowed it to wear to a ball. Once more, for the second time, the count took away the jewels. She did not have the money wherewith to satisfy the jeweler. And she could not return the tiara. That brings us up to the day of the count's death—and that day the former lover reached Paris.

"The countess had determined to get back the tiara—at any cost. Her accomplice? The *Sûreté* have the man Heldon under lock and key. She must have known him, the *Sûreté* argues; he had been an employee of her husband, and she knew he hated the count for a very good reason—his wife, Viola, had been the count's mistress. Englishmen do not forget a thing like that. What did the countess do?" Mr. Guelpa leaned forward with a new intensity. "She got Heldon to drive her to her husband's apartment. Heldon went in first." He paused a moment, then went on more quickly: "He told the count that the countess was waiting outside in an automobile to see him. Was the count frightened? Anyway, he refused to go. Heldon went back to the car, and the countess herself entered the flat. She did not persuade him to give up the tiara, though she must have been convinced that he still had it. How did she succeed in getting him to accompany her in Heldon's car? She may have feigned illness. There were two empty liqueur-glasses on the table, from one of which she may have drunk. The glasses indicate that the interview was amicable. At all events, the count accompanied her in the car.

"Bear in mind she knew he had the tiara. Was there a quarrel, a sudden attack? In that car, driven by Heldon in the night, the count was killed by a revolver-shot. One moment! That revolver belonged to the count himself, but when he left the house in the Avenue Henri Martin, he did not take it with him. It was seen by the servants lying on a table in the bedroom of the Comtesse de Granlieu. Do you see, Mr. Faynis?"

FAYNIS saw clearly enough; he recognized the strength of the case the *Sûreté* was building against the widow of the Comte de Granlieu, but there was something in the way Mr. Guelpa stated the case—something in his manner—that led Faynis to believe it was all preliminary and that, indeed, it was leading to something else. But what was that something else? Watching Mr. Guelpa through his half-shut eyes, he listened patiently, and, without the slightest attempt at concealment, he let his fingers rest quietly, reassuringly on Eva's hand.

"You see, Mr. Faynis, the revolver came from her house—that night. She and the count were in the car. Heldon drove it. Where? They left the flat in the Rue Boissy-d'Anglas; and the next trace of the car was found at the Pool of Auteuil, where the scarred tire left its unmistakable mark. Out of that car the body was dragged and thrust under the bushes. The revolver may have been dragged out with the body and fallen on the ground. In the darkness, it was not seen, perhaps. Anyway, it was left lying near the body. They were in haste—bitter haste to get away.

"Was there anything taken from the count? The pocketbook was untouched. Watch and rings and studs were left. But the one thing wanted—that they got. The tiara of diamonds which the Comte de Granlieu had twice—shall I say 'taken?' "

"Say 'stolen,' " Faynis put in bluntly.

"The tiara twice taken from the countess, which she, in her desperate need of giving it back to the jeweler, had visited him in his flat to secure. You see, Mr. Faynis——"

"I am waiting to hear," the lawyer answered quietly.

"Very well. The tiara was taken. Good! But the accomplice had to be paid—the man who drove the car—Heldon. How was he paid? She had no money, you know. Heldon was given a large diamond from the tiara. He took it—perhaps as security for his promised reward—perhaps because it would give him a hold on the Comtesse de Granlieu. If he were caught, he could implicate her and could force her to defend him; in the other event, he could demand for it what payment he pleased. It was his guarantee—his life insurance. So much for the man. When did they separate? The next trace we have of the countess is when she entered her home a little before midnight. She was agitated. Her clothes were stained with mud, and she told her maid to get rid of them."

Eva sat dazed; it seemed to her this old man, with his little, precise gestures, was weaving a spell round her—something frightful and cold that would kill her. She wanted to cry aloud, but no words came to her lips. She could only listen and watch the little gestures—the terrifying gestures of his sharp-fingered hands. Faynis looked at Mr. Guelpa with other eyes. It was not for nothing, he was sure, that the criminologist was thus laying bare the case of the *Sûreté*; and, in the gratitude he was beginning to feel for him, there was a great deal of admiration.

"And then, Mr. Guelpa?"

"Ah, the next morning! Yes. But one thing first—the friend of her youth from America. He called at her house, but was unable, he says, to find her. Where did he pass those evening hours up until midnight? Alone, he insists, in a motor-car, in a café, in the streets—hm. The examining magistrate will probably ascertain whether they met that night—the woman and the man from America. And the next morning? There was evident need of communicating with her accomplice—the man who had the diamond—Heldon.

"At half-past nine she crossed the Pont St. Michel in her motor-car. It was fortunate for me it was being driven slowly and by an expert chauffeur, or I should not be talking to you now."

"Fortunately for us, Mr. Guelpa."

"Possibly. At all events, I was on the bridge at that hour and I saw certain things. First, there was a woman who stopped and scrawled a message on one of the parapets and passed on. Presently—in the opposite direction—a man appeared and, pausing at that exact spot, swept his hand across what was written as though to rub it out. But nothing, Mr. Faynis, is ever rubbed out," Mr. Guelpa said significantly. "It was when I started to cross the roadway that I was nearly run down by the car of the Comtesse de Granlieu.

"First, the count's former mistress, who wrote a message on the parapet; then her husband, the man Heldon, and finally—hard on their heels—the countess.

"Then things moved fast. The car was identified. Heldon was warned that the police were after him and planned to get away. Viola was sent to pawn the diamond. But Heldon had been traced to a little café in the Rue de la Forge, and though Viola succeeded in reaching him and giving him the money she had procured, he was arrested while attempting to escape in the motor-car. The diamond was recovered. Heldon, the accomplice of that murder, is in a cell. These, Mr. Faynis, are some of the facts——"

"And speculations," Faynis put in.

"And speculations brought together by the *Sûreté*. Will Heldon talk? Unquestionably—to save his head."

"The reason I came here to-day—" Faynis began.

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"I know the reason," Mr. Guelpa said frankly. "Of course you wanted to know whether the Comtesse de Granlieu was—shall I say 'implicated?'—in the crime."

"Say anything you please," Faynis replied stolidly; "but is she to be arrested?"

EVA clutched his hand but made no sound. Mr. Guelpa slowly shook his head.

"The police are not done with the case yet," he said, and added, with a sudden grimness, "Neither am I."

Faynis smiled.

"I did not think you were, Mr. Guelpa."

"Not quite. But you, as a lawyer, see the case. When such an accusation is brought, the police should be able to prove five things: the motive, the means, the opportunity, the action, and death directly resulting.

"Now, the motive alleged is mixed; it is made up of fear and hatred for the Comte de Granlieu—fear for her fortune and hatred for him, of love for another man, a friend and companion of her youth, of a determination to recover the tiara and return it to the jeweler, who was in a position to cause a scandal, to say the least. Had she known the other man, her lover, was on the way, she might have let the matter of the tiara go by; but she did not know. The motive was there.

"And, second, the means. She made use of an accomplice who had many reasons to hate the count and yet was still in touch with him—a man, moreover, who wanted money as well as revenge. She could promise both.

"The opportunity? It came when she found her husband in his flat and succeeded in tempting him into Heldon's car.

"The action? She had taken the revolver from her bedroom. In the car, the count refused to give up the tiara, which was still in his possession. Was there a quarrel? The car bore marks of a struggle. In the quarrel, she shot and killed him.

"And the fifth point? Death was the direct result of that shot.

"That, I think, is a fair statement of the case, Mr. Faynis, which you will have to meet."

"Say *we* shall have to meet, Mr. Guelpa; for it is upon you I count most."

"Hm," said Mr. Guelpa. "I am retained, you know, by the Marquis de Granlieu."

"But first of all by the truth! I know your reputation, Mr. Guelpa."

And Mr. Guelpa, who was not indifferent to praise, smiled gently. Then, at last, Eva spoke.

"John," she exclaimed, "I can't go back to that house—there are eyes everywhere!"

"Why should you?" asked Mr. Guelpa, his smile broadening. "Stay here. That will interest the Pointed Tower."

He walked to the window and looked out. The quiet gentlemen were strolling to and fro; some of them were lurking in doorways. Again Mr. Guelpa smiled.

IT WAS a tall building in a quiet street. Mr. Guelpa looked up at the windows on the first floor—that is, one pair of stairs from the ground floor. They were broad windows curtained with blue silk. It was a prosperous-looking house; it had a staid and respectable air.

"But houses are like people," Mr. Guelpa told himself; "they are deceptive."

He passed the porter's lodge without being questioned—the *concierge* was busy elsewhere—and walked up the broad stairs to the apartment on the next floor. In a little brass shield on the door was the name: "Jandel."

Mr. Guelpa rang the bell. No one came, and, after waiting a few minutes, he rang again—this time imperatively. Finally the door opened a little and he saw an old woman's head. It was a lean old head with vigilant eyes.

"Mr. Jandel?" he said.

"No; he'll not see any one," the woman replied.

"Still no better—how unfortunate! But he will receive me. You know," Mr. Guelpa added confidentially through the half-opened door, "every one does. So you will give him this card—and I will wait in the hall—no; not outside, my good woman." And he pushed his way into the flat.

She took the card reluctantly and went away with it, leaving Mr. Guelpa in the broad, dimly lighted hall. He looked about, examining everything, but he did not move from the door until the old woman returned; then he followed her to a large bedroom at the back. There was not much light in the room, but Mr. Guelpa made out the form of a man lying in the bed. Against the white pillow the head showed up clearly, and there was nothing noble about it. It was a hairy head, narrow-faced, with little black eyes and a high nose.

Outside the white bed cover lay two long, thin hands. A bandage or handkerchief was tied round the neck and partly concealed by the coat of the pajamas.

"I am sorry to disturb you while you are ill, but one needs must, you know—and I shall not intrude save for a few moments."

"I'm not very well," said Mr. Jandel—he spoke in a pleasant, cultivated voice, though it was a trifle hoarse—"and I am better lying down. I have a bad heart."

"And a cold?"

"A slight cold."

"It is about your chauffeur," began Mr. Guelpa. "I am afraid you have been deceived in him. Heldon, is it not? An Englishman. You have heard of his arrest, of course?"

"Yes." Jandel's voice was low.

There were two doors to the bedroom. One led from the hall of the flat and the other, covered by a dull-colored portière, seemingly to a dressing-room or bathroom. Jandel glanced once or twice at this portière when Mr. Guelpa spoke of the chauffeur.

"There is a draft from the door," said Mr. Guelpa suddenly, "and with your cold it is dangerous. Shall I close it?"

Without waiting for a reply, he went quickly to the portière and drew it aside. The door was closed. But had it been closed when he left his chair? He was not certain. He thought he had heard the click of a latch. He dropped the curtain and went back to his seat near the bed.

"It is shut now," he said.

Jandel made no comment; he lay perfectly still, watching, watching—with his little black eyes.

"Arrested," Mr. Guelpa repeated, "in the case of the unfortunate Comte de Granlieu. A sad case! Did he have authority to use your motor-car?"

"No."

"But he had it out the night the count was killed. You know that? Your car? It was the death-car. He did not have your permission to take it that night?"

"No."

"How long had he been with you?"

"About a year," Jandel replied, with an air of frankness, though he kept his voice low; "but he was not satisfactory. Quite untrustworthy. In fact, I think he used to take the car without my knowledge, and probably made a good bit of money. But he was a spendthrift, a gambler—he couldn't let horses alone. Not a good man, I fear. I took him on after the count got rid of him—the Comte de Granlieu, you know—the fellow was once in his stables."

"You knew the count?"

"Who did not?" Jandel asked watchfully. "Who did not? In Paris, I mean."

"You had business with him now and then?"

"No; not recently. Perhaps a little racing business, as with every one else, but that would have been long ago."

"And you saw him last?"

"Oh, I couldn't remember. Not for months."

"Of course."

Again Mr. Guelpa fancied he heard that faint click of a latch, as though the bathroom door had been opened very deftly. He did not look round, but raised his voice a trifle.

"Then Heldon, you say, had no right to take your car that night. You did not know the car was out—the murder-car, I mean. It is bad, Mr. Jandel. You know that scoundrel might have implicated you in his crime, for, after all, you own the car. Fortunately he is locked up, and we know—yes; we know—" The face on the pillow did not change its expression, but the eyes flickered a little. "Yes; we know," Mr. Guelpa repeated. "By the way, where were you that night, Mr. Jandel—I mean the night Heldon murdered the Comte de Granlieu in your car?"

"Here," replied Jandel. "In bed."

"Ill?"

Jandel hesitated; with an almost involuntary movement his hand went to his neck. It was evident that he was thinking fast—debating in his own mind the answer he should give. Finally he said:

"An accident—I had an accident. It happened some time before."

"Before when?"

"Before the night you have been talking about so much," Jandel retorted, letting an edge of bad temper appear. "It was a motor-car accident—nothing serious. The wind-shield was broken, and a flying bit of glass wounded me. That is all."

"I noticed a new glass had been put in," Mr. Guelpa said. "Of course that explains it."

"Yes."

"Not a serious wound, your doctor tells you? By the way, who is your doctor?"

"I didn't say anything about a doctor."

"No? Well, who is he?"

Jandel had no answer ready, and while he fumbled in his mind for a name, Mr. Guelpa watched him with smiling patience.

"Perhaps you will think of it another time. Perhaps to-morrow. I may see you to-morrow, Mr. Jandel. In fact, I will call in the morning. I am very much obliged to you. You have helped us considerably by what you have said of Heldon. He is a desperate scoundrel, I fear. I can find my way out without any trouble. Good-by, Mr. Jandel, or, rather, *au revoir*."

Jandel muttered his good-by. He looked ill—far more so than when Mr. Guelpa had entered the room. His face was the color of impure wax; his lips fell back from his teeth, and in his defiant, keen eyes was the shadow of fear.

MR. GUELPA, with his little measured steps, went quietly from the room and shut the door from without. There was no puzzlement in his face. Under the dyed mustache glimmered a smile of perfect satisfaction. He had found the man he wanted; and he was telling himself, in police slang, that by the next day "he would be ripe." There was no occasion for haste; far better let this reluctant witness brood over things for the night—brood and ripen, or, what was better still, make some sudden move that would lead to swifter discovery.

With his queer little chuckle of satisfaction, Mr. Guelpa went toward the outer door of the flat. The hall was rather dark, and he walked carefully, taking short steps and peering through his eye-glasses. Suddenly, just in front of him, a door opened, letting in a flood of daylight. Framed in that doorway stood a woman.

It was only for a second he saw her, for almost as quickly as the door had been opened it was shut again, darkening the hall. And in the darkness the woman passed him hurriedly, with swift, long steps, going toward Jandel's room.

He turned and watched her, for Mr. Guelpa had not only seen her; he had recognized her as well. Did he ever forget any one? And this blond, lithe woman was not easily forgotten. She vibrated with a life of her own—it was in her walk, in her eyes, even in her bran-colored hair. Oh, he knew her! The woman who had scrawled the blue-chalk cipher on the bridge, the woman of the diamond—Heldon's wife!

Mr. Guelpa let himself out and hastened down the long flight of stairs to the ground floor. The *concierge*, he noticed, was now in the porter's lodge. Once in the street, Mr. Guelpa kept close to the house wall, lest he might be seen from the windows of Jandel's flat, and he turned the corner before he signaled to Rossignol.

"No questions, Inspector," he said rapidly. "These are orders. Jandel, who owns the murder-car, is in bed in the back room of the apartment facing the court. There's an old woman in service—and another."

"Not that damned woman?" Rossignol interjected; the damned woman had given him bad half-hours.

"Yes; Heldon's wife. Now, I do not want them pinched—not yet. But I want them watched. No one must leave that flat—neither Jandel nor the woman—without your knowing it. If the Heldon woman comes out, arrest her. I cannot trust you to keep track of her."

Rossignol swore softly and thoroughly, but made no other reply.

"It is Jandel you are to follow if he leaves the house. Do not quit him by an inch. If he goes out, I want to know everywhere he goes—every one he speaks to."

"Yes, sir. And the chief?"

"I will telephone him."

"Meanwhile," said Rossignol, "I'll put one man in the porter's lodge, another at the back to watch the servants' entrance. We'll cover all the doors and windows. If a fly gets out of that building without my knowing it, you may have my head."

"I do not want you to lose your head, Rossignol," Mr. Guelpa remarked grimly, as he turned away. "To-night, I especially want you to keep it. I think you will need it."

Seen, half seen, unseen, the police closed round the tall house in the quiet street; without laying hands on it, they held it as a cat holds a mouse.

VIOLA, when she made her escape from the little café in the Rue de la Forge—where she had given Heldon the five thousand francs obtained by selling the famous Granlieu diamond to the aged "fence" in the Rue de Provence—had almost brushed against the agents of the police, but they had not yet been warned to be on the lookout for her. Before Rossignol could send round his instructions, she had already slipped through the café and gained the avenue. There she arrived just in time to see her big man pulled down, thrown into the back of the motor-car and driven away by the detectives. She saw, too, Rossignol turn back on her trail. Him, she did not fear much; but she was sick—sick and savage—at Heldon's capture. And there was nothing she could do to help him—nothing but keep out of the hands of the police. If she were to be of use, she must be free. In the last few lean months her help had been abundantly given, and she had no intention of failing him now.

Their marriage had been rather fine in a way, and quite idiotic. She had walked away from all her possessions, and he had walked away from his job. Their love, too, though it was not that of old-fashioned romance, was tough of fiber and lasted well. Heldon had an Englishman's ineradicable desire to be decent in his home life, and Viola was decent, because, like other women more or less, she took the color of her husband. Their one want was money. And they had to take civilization as they found it—unfortunately there are not many ways of earning a dishonest livelihood for an outcast racing-man, even with the assistance of a governess who has gone wrong. When Heldon got the job as chauffeur for Jandel, things had gone better in a way—and worse. Their world, which had never been commonplace, began to take on mysterious complications. In Paris illicit book-making is exciting in itself and leads to strange things. Heldon had that kind of blundering honesty which it is so hard for an Englishman to get rid of, and Viola, alert and quick-witted as a fox, watched for him, worked for him, kept him out of the toils. Heldon really was simple; he could not distinguish between a kindly, dishonest waiter bringing him illicit bets and a detective trying to pass himself off as an accomplice, but Viola had the *flair*. And now, she told herself, the big man had been pulled down.

What could she do? What must she do? Above all, she must keep her freedom. She dared not go back to the flat where she and Heldon had passed their kind of honeymoon and the subsequent lean months of married life; that would be to fall into the trap.

But Jandel? It was hardly possible that Jandel's house was watched.

There was a grim look on her young, thin face, and the pale eyes were hard and relentless as she made her way to the tall house in the quiet street. Her man must be given back to her, or— She did not finish the thought; only, she knew that nothing could stand in the way of her determination, that nothing counted except her man.

Without haste, without visible excitement, she slipped through the crowded streets until she came to Jandel's apartment.

She did not think she had been followed; at each turning she had made sure of it. She passed the *concierge* unseen and went to the lift. It was one of those self-operating French elevators; she had but to close the door on herself and touch the electric button denoting the floor she wanted, and the lift went up and stopped of its own accord.

AN OLD woman answered her ring at Jandel's bell. Viola thrust her out of the way and entered, closing the door.

"Where is he, Mélanie?"

"You can't see him," the old woman replied sullenly.

Viola laughed aloud; and her laughter, was not good to hear.

"Where is he?"

"You can't see him," Mélanie repeated doggedly. "He's in bed."

"Fool! Get out of my way!" With unexpected strength she pushed the woman aside and made her way, unguided, to Jandel's room. The door was ajar, and she heard him coughing. As she entered, he sat up in bed and glared at her.

"Yes; it's me, right enough," she said savagely, and stood over him, her slim gloved hands on her hips, her head up and a bad light in her eyes.

"I see it's you," replied Jandel, after a pause. "What's the matter?"

When she told him of Heldon's arrest, he gave at first no signs of excitement. Indeed, Jandel was not the kind of man to show excitement when a big thing happened. For some little mischance—coffee served too cold, a crumpled rose-leaf—he would flutter and shout; but he had faced too many bad moments in life to give way to useless anger when he needed all his wits about him. He was no weakling. It were easier to tell who he was not than who he was; for Jandel was a man without a background. He had been a patriotic citizen—naturalized—of many countries. He had worn lightly many names. In Paris he had fitted in the life of underground bookmaking, the lending of money and every other form of money traffic that can be carried on advantageously in the dark. He had a horror of crime and a dread of the law; but, loving money, and it being his business to get money, he had been forced to look for it, often in dangerous places.

He had made use of many men; to some of them the service had brought disaster. Heldon, he had never greatly trusted, though he was shaping into a useful man. There was a blunt honesty about the Englishman which made a good cover for Jandel's shady transactions. And in case things went wrong—in case of those sudden discoveries which at any moment are liable to trip up the carefulest rogue—he had counted on Heldon and the fast motor-car for escape.

Now the fool had let himself be arrested!

And the woman was here—standing over him with her savage and silly air of tragedy! He was afraid of women, even old women; they were always doing unexpected things, breaking up the best laid plans with their anger or tears. If there was trouble—and Heldon's arrest spelled trouble—she was probably responsible for it; and with unspoken wrath, deep in his heart, Jandel cursed her. But his speaking voice was suave enough.

"Sit down, Viola; tell me about it. And don't lose courage."

"Courage!" she cried scornfully. "You'll see I have plenty of courage before I'm done with you! It would never have happened but for you."

"But tell me——"

"I'm telling you, all right! It's your fault they got him. Oh, you were out of town, were you? Liar! He could take care of himself, could he? Well, you'll see whether he can take care of himself or not! And if he can't, I can!"

"Viola, if you will tell me quietly what has happened——"

"I was followed," she said, and she sat down on the edge of the bed, as though a sudden weakness had come over her, and put her hands to her face.

"Followed? Followed where?"

"Meyer's. In the Rue de Provence. Your friend. They've got him, too."

Jandel's face was black with anger, but he kept his voice in control.

"Why did you go there?"

"You were out of town, were you? Liar! I went there to get money. I had to get my man away to England. I tell you they were after him. I sold one of the diamonds to Meyer."

"You fool!"

"Was I? And you? What were you doing? Do you suppose I'd let them get Heldon—when I could raise the money? But Meyer was taken. I found Heldon in a place he was waiting for me and gave him the money, but—" Her voice broke.

"He was arrested, then?"

"They got him with the money on him, and they got the car."

"How long ago?"

"Do you suppose I wasted any time in coming to you—for you're the man who has got to get him out, Jandel. You're that man! And soon!" she added savagely.

"Patience, Viola; let me think. Of course there is a way out. I must think. He shall have a lawyer—everything shall be done for him. If I were only myself for one day—but I'm really ill, Viola." Jandel put a good deal of pathos in his voice. "You see, Viola, you made a bad blunder—that diamond. Why did he let you do it? Money? If you had only come to me!"

"Come to you? Heldon came twice—twice—and you were out of town. Liar! You were here all the time. If I had come myself, I'd have broken the door down to get at you—but I didn't know."

"He knew well enough he could have all the money he needed—you, too."

"I'll have it now! Money for Heldon's bail, for you've got to get him out. And the best lawyer in Paris. You understand that?"

"I'll do it, Viola, of course. Don't be so violent. I'll secure a lawyer; I'll arrange for bail at once, and we'll have Heldon a free man as soon as possible. I'll not lose an hour. You must come back to-morrow. Trust me."

"I'll not come back to-morrow," Viola said calmly. "You might be out of town. Liar!"

She stood up and slowly removed her gloves; then she removed her hat and coat and tossed them on a chair.

"No; I'll not come back—I'll stay."

JANDEL made no further protest, but his eyes were sullen and evil and, for one who knew the man, menacing. He told her quietly enough that Mélanie would give her a room; and when he was alone he got out of bed and dressed himself quickly. It was evident that his weakness was not a pretense, and he groaned a little now and then as he got into his garments and stooped to tie his shoes. He put on an old brown suit and, in place of a collar, tied round his neck a black-silk scarf, tucking the ends under his waistcoat. He looked at his face in the mirror with a sort of self-pity.

"I'm ill," he muttered. "Oh, damn them all!"

He went out into the hall, where the telephone was placed, and rang up a number. Viola, hearing the bell, came boldly from her room and listened. All she heard was: "That you? Come here at once."

Jandel saw her, but made no comment. He hung up the receiver and went back to his room and lay down, dressed as he was, on the bed, drawing the cover up to his chin. With half-shut eyes he waited. After a while he pulled the bell-rope that hung over the head of his bed, and when Mélanie came, he said:

"Durand is coming. Bring him here at once."

"I will," Mélanie replied. "And that woman—is she to stay?"

"Yes; give her the other bedroom."

"And feed her?"

"I suppose so," Jandel said. There was something in the tone of his voice that made the old woman look keenly at him, but his eyes were turned away. There were many things Jandel dreamed of doing—and they ranged from poisoning to burning—but he never did them, for he was afraid of crime, unless it was safe. And yet who could tell when a crime was really safe? Was it ever safe when a woman was in it? And this question of his safety occupied his mind until Durand arrived—a well-dressed young man, with close-clipped red hair and a lean face. He was alert—this Durand—ingratiating and self-confident. In Jandel's wide-spread and dubious business, he occupied the position of clerk—for Jandel had no confidants. The complicated betting business, to be sure, was largely in his hands, though Jandel kept a keen eye on it and had a fairly accurate idea of just about how much Durand robbed him of every week; but that was part of the game. The bets, gathered in cafés and wine-shops and restaurants, were not large in themselves, but they mounted up to a big sum every week. And Durand, in addition to his salary and commission, paid himself well for the risk he ran. Jandel knew it, and made no complaint. He believed that Durand, like many men, was dishonest only up to a certain point—he would pilfer, but he would hesitate to rob. Moreover, for some obscure reason, these two rogues were fond of each other.

"You are looking bad, *patron*," Durand said.

"I'm ill," Jandel said shortly; "but business—" He threw off the cover and got out of bed. "Have you any money in hand?"

"Only a few thousands—enough to carry on with for a day or two."

"You'll have to go to the bank for me."

"Certainly, *patron*."

"I'll give you two checks—one on each of the banks."

He filled up the checks and signed them. Durand read the amount and opened his eyes, but made no remark.

"Some of it in small notes—say two thousand," Jandel said; "and be quick about it, Durand. And, of course, this is private business. You'll not say a word to any one. I need the money. I'll tell you more when you return—and, Durand, I've something for you, too—a thing there's big money in for you—big money! That can wait till you come back. Make haste, Durand."

"Quick as I can, *patron!*" And Durand was off. His employer lay down on the bed, covered himself up to the chin and waited. He waited a long time, without impatience.

Meanwhile, that brisk young man with the red head was speeding in a taxi toward the bank. Looking at the checks, he said softly to himself: "The wicked old devil! He's going to skip—and leave me to hold the bag. Oh, naughty, naughty!" And Durand's smile was pleasant to see, for into his mind had come the fanciful notion that, after all, it would be better if he himself took that journey abroad.

"Poor Jandel—he's too ill to travel," he told himself, "and I need a change. Fifty thousand! Poor old papa!"

He cashed the two checks and went back quickly to his room and packed a bag. Then he thought of Jandel fuming in bed; it would be best to keep him quiet for a while. So he called him up on the telephone and told him, with some mystery, he dared not come at present; the money was safe and he would bring it the first thing in the morning. With that he hung up the receiver, unheeding Jandel's fiercely whispered expostulations, and the evening train carried him and his bag and the money onward toward the Mediterranean. Durand had always like Monte Carlo—and with fifty thousand——

AND Jandel waited. Throughout the night and throughtout the next day he waited with growing suspicion. He was fond of Durand; and he began to realize that always it's the rogue you are fond of that "does you"—the others can't.

When midday had come and gone, when the afternoon began to wear away, Jandel had no longer any doubt that his clerk had fled with the money. He could get no answer over the telephone, though he tried again and again.

And the woman gave him no peace. She prowled about him. She was violent in her demands for money, for a lawyer to get her man out of prison, for immediate action. He stood her off as best he could, with one lie after another—a great advocate had been engaged by his clerk, bail was being arranged for Heldon, and in another day he would be set free. Suspicious, unbelieving, Viola watched him.

"I'll trust you a few hours longer," she threatened, "and then——"

He was afraid of her; he was afraid of her insolence and her recklessness and her strong young arms.

He had not undressed since Durand's visit, though he kept to his bed, drinking the soup the old woman brought him. Covered up to his chin, only his hairy head exposed, he lay there, waiting. Now and then Viola heard him moving about the room, but by the time she had gone round by the bathroom and looked in, he would be in bed again. But she suspected every movement he made. She thought, perhaps, he was not ill after all. He was a liar, of course. What was he planning as he lay there?

Then the ring at the door-bell, and the little man who insisted on seeing Jandel—to her knowledge she had never seen him, and he might be any one—this dapper little man in the round black hat and the eyeglasses—he might be one of Jandel's associates or the famous lawyer who was to set her husband free. Slipping off her shoes, Viola crept into the bathroom adjoining Jandel's chamber and stood, hardly breathing, behind the partly open door which was concealed by a portière. Though she could not see, she could hear. They were talking about Heldon. That much she heard, and then the little man started up and came toward her. Just in time she closed the door, cautiously but swiftly. She dared not lock it. Nothing happened, but a few moments passed before she took the risk of opening the door once more. She held it ajar and listened. This time, short fragments of the conversation reached her. There was first the talk of the "murder-car"—of Heldon, the "scoundrel" who had almost "implicated" Jandel in his crime, of the help Jandel was giving toward the conviction of the "desperate scoundrel"—Heldon! All this she heard only in fragments as she crouched behind the door. This man, there, was of the police. And Jandel knew. And Jandel was betraying her man!

SHE WENT back to her own room and put on her shoes. Her anger was too fierce for caution now. She went boldly into the hall, though she knew the detective might be there, and hurried to Jandel's room.

"I was listening," she said, "you dog! If you've sold Heldon to that detective, you'd better be dead—than in my hands."

"You couldn't have heard very accurately, Viola," Jandel replied, without heeding her threat. "I was only playing for time. Don't be a fool. Nothing is going to happen to Heldon. He'll be out to-morrow. I had to admit he was my chauffeur. What harm has that done? They knew it, anyway. They have my car. Heldon was in it when he was taken."

She sat on the bed and leaned over him until her young, hard face was only a few inches from his, and she said,

"If my man is not free to-morrow before noon, I'll send you to keep him company."

"You needn't bully me. I want him out as much as you do."

"Remember what I say, Jandel!"

Suddenly his temper broke.

"Take your damned face away!" he snarled. "And what do you suppose I'd be doing? Where would I put you? I had only to say a word to that man, and you know it. I don't want any more of your bullying. I'm doing the best I can for you and for Heldon and for myself. Now, get out! I want to rest."

"You can't frighten me," retorted Viola. "It's my man I'm thinking of. You've got until to-morrow."

The day dragged on and the night came; she did not mean to sleep. She placed a big chair near the door of her bedroom, leaving it ajar so she could see any one passing in the hall; and for hours she sat there.

She heard the old woman toddle off to her sleeping-place somewhere in the rear of the flat; a door shut noisily; then silence. She must have dozed off into an uneasy sleep, filled with dreams of disaster—of Heldon hunted by thousands of men, with wolf-heads on their human bodies—of herself falling into pits of darkness and terror. Out of these dreams she woke with a start. She could see nothing. The room, as well as the hall, was unlighted. And she heard nothing. For a moment she waited. Then she crept down the long hall toward Jandel's room and listened at the door.

He was there; she could hear his footsteps going to and fro. Suddenly the door opened on her—so suddenly she had no time to move back—and Jandel stood in the doorway, staring down at her. He was fully dressed, wearing even an overcoat and hat. In his left hand he carried a black bag. When he saw Viola crouching on the floor, he gave a sort of gasp. It was only for a second he hesitated. Then his right hand shot out and he seized her by the shoulder, dragging her to her feet.

"What are you doing here?" he whispered hoarsely.

"And you? You're trying to get away! I knew it! So that's your game. And leave Heldon to pay! No, you don't, you dog!"

"Keep quiet!"

He dropped the bag he was carrying and caught her by the throat and shook her to and fro. His eyes were deadly; there was in them the terrible fear that drives a man to murder. She could not get her breath. Never had she thought there was such strength in his hands. She tore at them, but could not break their grip. With one last effort of will and hate, she hurled herself against him, and Jandel went crashing down against the door, which swung back into the room under his weight. As he fell, he pulled her down with him, but the hold on her throat was broken. He lay very still.

She rolled away from him, gasping for breath. Little by little life came back to her; she could breathe. She got up on her knees and looked at the man. His face was in the light. His eyes were staring—but not at her. He made no attempt to move. He just lay there, staring at nothing. Warily, still fearing him, she stood up.

"Jandel!"

There was no answer. She touched him with her foot. He did not move. He lay half in and half out of the doorway, the black bag at his feet. She picked it up and, still watching him over her shoulder, carried it to the bed and tore it open.

There were papers—many papers—and on top was a flat, square envelope containing bank-notes—how many she did not stop to ascertain, but a glance told her that Jandel had got together, in some way, a good sum of money for his intended flight. She tucked them inside her blouse. To get out of the room she would have to step across his legs, which lay on the threshold. They looked horrible; one was crumpled up as though there were no bones in it. She made a sudden dash for the hall and left the man lying there, perfectly still.

The hall door was locked and chained. She unfastened it silently, with infinite care, and stepped out. She pulled the door to, but dared not close it, as she feared the noise it would make. Quietly she went down the stairs to the ground floor. The elevator, she noticed, was open. She saw no one, heard no one. There was a light in the porter's lodge. She would have to pass it. And then her heart turned to water.

At the top of the stairs, down which she had crept so quietly, she heard a sound—voices. Looking up, she saw dark figures—men—two, perhaps, or more. And in front of her, from the porter's lodge, Rossignol advanced, smiling triumphantly.

"Well, my girl," he said, "this time I think I've got you. Guérin!" he called, and then two other detectives emerged from the court at the left.

They were behind her and in front of her and were closing in from right and left. Two, perhaps more, held the top of the stairs. It was her impulse to run forward—that is always the first impulse—but suddenly she wheeled and dashed into the open elevator and slammed the door just as Rossignol ran up. She pressed the electric button and the lift crept up, slowly, but gathering speed. There was no way of stopping it between the floors, but Rossignol had but to touch an outside button to halt it at the floor above, where he had posted his men. He rushed up the stairs, followed by Guérin, and reached the floor above just as the elevator stopped.

"Get her!" he shouted, but he himself was there first. He dragged open the doors of the lift. It was empty!

He turned and looked at his men. No one spoke. Rossignol did not even swear.

"Into the flat!" he shouted.

The unlocked door swung open as he pushed it, and the detectives swarmed into the flat. Jandel, they found lying as he had fallen, staring with fixed eyes—one leg crumpled under him. He was dead. Back in a servant's room they found an old woman and dragged her out of her bed, stupid with fright. Of Viola there was no trace.

MR. GUELPA was in his mildest mood. It was the morning of the following day. The Comtesse de Granlieu had returned to her home in the Avenue Henri Martin after her "appeal to Cæsar" with reenforced courage and a firmer grip on life. She was the kind of woman who is strong when strong men are round her—who gets her courage out of their courage. And though Faynis steadied her, it was from this little dyed and twinkling man she drew the greater fund of confidence. That much the meeting with Mr. Guelpa had done for her. As for Mr. Guelpa, he had got something more out of it. He knew how strong a case the *Sûreté* was building up against her; he knew how her actions and motives fitted into the police theory; he knew, perhaps, the name in the sealed envelope the marquis had given him; he knew that the presence in Paris of Faynis needed, in the mind of the police, more explanation than had been given; he knew the network of evidence spun in the servants' hall; he knew the revolver found by the body fitted her little hand. But, after studying her, he summed up his opinion in this way:

"It is because she could not do it," he said, "that she did not do it."

But had she inspired the crime?

Of one thing, Mr. Guelpa had convinced himself: There had been two men in the murder-car that night when it halted by the Pool of Auteuil that the dead body might be lifted out and thrust into the thicket. Two men had carried the body. Not a man and a woman—at all events, not the Comtesse de Granlieu, with her feminine habits of fear and helplessness.

But the inspiration of the black deed might have been hers. The police were still clinging to this assumption, finding the motive in her hatred for the husband who had robbed her, deceived her, deserted her. It was a possible theory, and Mr. Guelpa did not see that he was wholly in a position to destroy it and set up another. The one thing he had been able to do was to convince the authorities of the unwisdom of ordering the detention or even making any formal examination of the woman they more than suspected of the crime.

After his conversation with Jandel—that man lying furtive and wounded on his bed—Mr. Guelpa began to see light. He had left Jandel safe in the hands of the police. That he could get away unseen was impossible. And yet, somehow, Mr. Guelpa had a suspicion that Jandel, as he lay there glooming in his bed, was planning to bolt.

And he had no doubt that Jandel had been implicated in the crime; but how and why?

It would be difficult to deduce the part that Jandel had played until he knew the actual motive that had inspired him. It was not by guesswork that motives would be discovered. It was a Jandel himself who must lead them to it, and it was best, therefore, to leave him free—at the end of a long string. Either he would try to run away—and this would be confession—or he would get in touch with his associates and then betray both them and himself. In any case, Jandel knew, and, intentionally or in spite of himself, he could be made to speak.

IT WAS of these things Mr. Guelpa thought as he sipped his coffee and smoked a cigarette. Every discovery he had made in the case had led him, step by step, to Jandel—from the cipher scrawled in blue chalk on the bridge to the scarred tire of the murder-car, from the diamond to Heldon and Viola—everything seemed to converge on this one man. There was, to be sure, nothing tangible, but it was as though finger after finger were pointing directly at him—that furtive and fevered man yonder in bed, watched now by the police. And it was with great satisfaction that Mr. Guelpa sipped his coffee and reflected that the case was nearly at an end so far as he was concerned.

"Now that we've got Jandel," he remarked, "it is virtually over."

His wife looked at him with approval and talked of holidays and the seashore; Julie grinned amiably and called him "dear fa-ther." And Mr. Guelpa, having dusted his hat and kissed his family, was just about to leave the house on his way to the *Sûreté*—his neatly folded report in his pocket—when Rossignol was shown up to his study. The little inspector was unshaven and dirty. A black mood was on him, and his good-morning was short. He waited only until Mrs. Guelpa and Julie had left the room; then he closed the door behind them and threw his hat on the floor and swore softly.

"The woman got away," he said.

"Again?" Mr. Guelpa asked blandly.

"Yes."

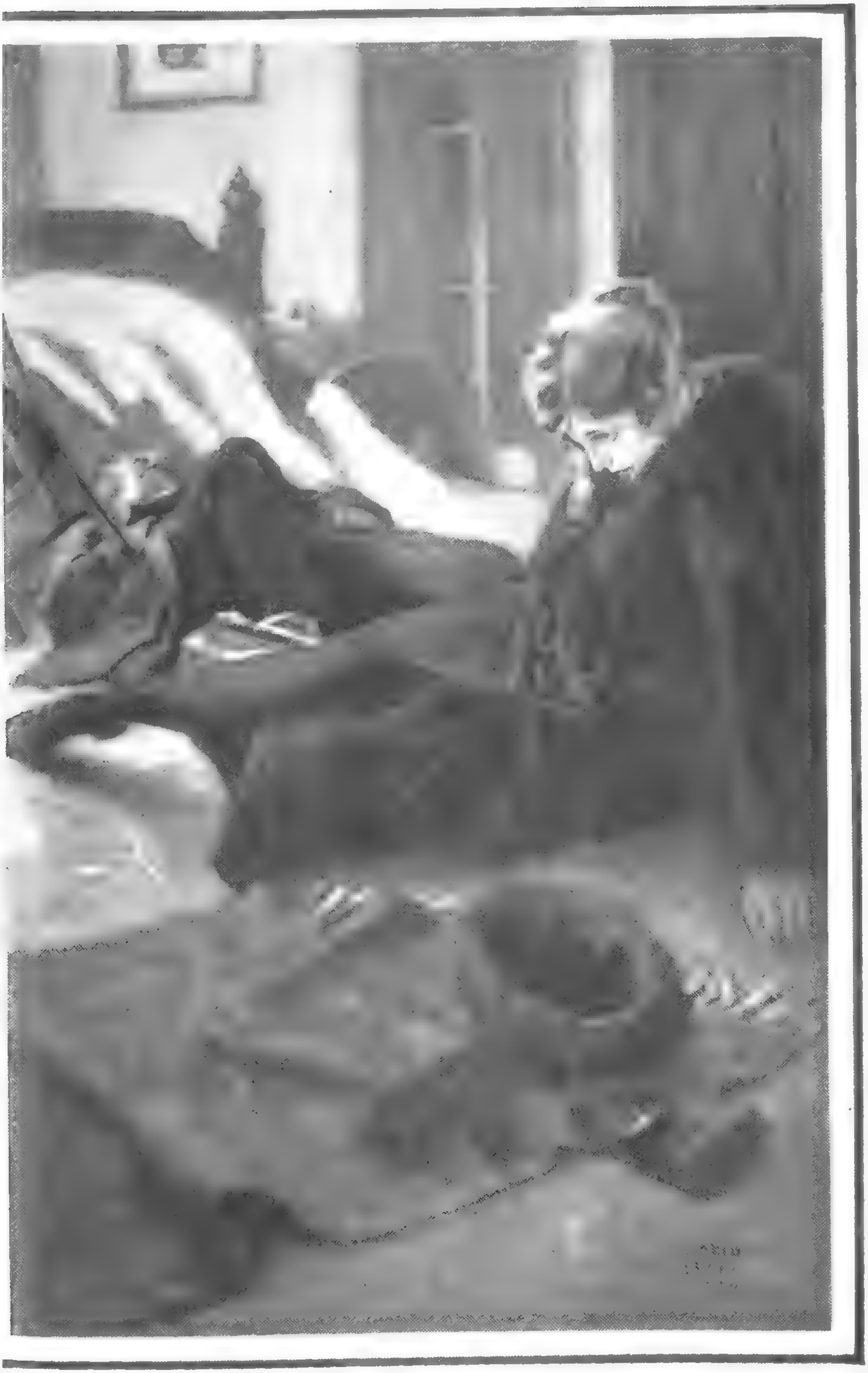
"And the man?"

"Dead."

"Really, Inspector, you seem to have handled the case in an interesting way. Perhaps you will give me the details. Jandel is dead?"

"Yes."

"Killed?"



As Jandel fell, he pulled Viola down with him, but the hold on her throat was broken. He lay very still. She rolled away from him, gasping for breath.

"I suppose so."

"Sit down, Rossignol," Mr. Guelpa said patiently, "and tell me the facts. Jandel killed?"

"We found him in his bedroom lying over the threshold—dead. The body was completely dressed—even to an overcoat. There was a bag all packed near by. He must have been trying to get out of the flat when he was killed."

"Trying to get away? As we expected. Any signs of a struggle?"

"No. And no weapon was found. Dr. Cray is making the medical report, and they want you at the Pointed Tower."

"Yes. We will go. And the woman, Rossignol? You do not seem to have much luck with Mrs. Heldon."

"I may have luck with her yet," the inspector said savagely.

"I hope so."

"I had no orders to arrest her—until she tried to get away from the flat. I do not want to criticize my orders, but you can see yourself that gave her a chance. And I had orders to follow Jandel. Not to arrest him—to shadow him."

"Certainly. The orders were clear enough. What happened?"

"There were seven of us on the job. Guérin and I were in the courtyard of the building. We were exactly opposite the staircase and the elevator. There was an agent in the porter's lodge and two in the street. And two men had been placed upstairs on the floor where Jandel's flat is located. That was all; but it didn't look as though a cockroach could get out unseen and uncaught."

"But Mrs. Heldon, not being a cockroach——"

"Got away. Yes. It was just before two o'clock in the morning. We were all on watch. She came out of Jandel's apartment and walked down the stairs. Our men above followed her noiselessly to the top of the landing and signaled me. I had only about fifty feet to go, and I went forward to grab her."

Mr. Guelpa was smiling.

"I think I see," he said. "The doors of the elevator had been left open—some one overlooked that interesting fact. Is that the way she escaped?"

"You're right enough, sir. She darted in, slammed the door and the lift started up, but I stopped it at the next floor. Three of us, you understand, were there when it came to a standstill. I opened it myself. It was empty—that's all."

"Of course no one could get out between floors?"

"No; the doors lock automatically until the elevator stops at a landing."

"You are sure she got in?"

"Certain—but she didn't get out."

"Nonsense, Rossignol! The only question is how she got out. I should like to see that elevator. But I do not know. I am very busy, Inspector. Suppose you go back and have a look at it yourself. It is the old-fashioned sort, I presume, and at the top, in the roof, you will notice an opening for purposes of cleaning and repair which will probably be covered with a screen. I think your agile lady had an eye for that screen. While the lift was going up, she got on the seat, slipped through the opening and crouched on the top of the car. You did not look there?"

"There was the flat to think of," replied Rossignol. "No; I didn't look."

"And you did not send the lift down?"

"No."

"Then, while you were in the flat, the excellent Mrs. Heldon—what a wife; dear me, what a wife she would make!—stood up on top of the lift. Being a tall woman with long legs and arms, I do not think she had much difficulty in reaching the door which opened on the landing above. Then she drew herself up, closed the door and went—Where did she go?"

"Oh, it's clear enough now. She must have got away by the roof and into another house. I'll swear she wasn't hidden anywhere in that building."

"Rossignol, I wish you would arrest that woman—I want her."

"I'll do it if you'll tell me how. It's not for want of trying."

"On the whole," Mr. Guelpa decided, "I think perhaps I had best do it myself. Yes; I will get hold of her myself. Not to-day—but to-morrow or next day. At what hour would you suggest, Inspector? It does not matter? Good! I will arrange it for the day after to-morrow at about dusk—say seven o'clock in the evening."

HE CHUCKLED to himself in the not unpleasant way he had as he watched Rossignol's ill temper; then abruptly he said:

"Never mind about her, Inspector. Now tell me about the man. Quick, now; this is important. I want to hear all you can tell before we go back to the Pointed Tower."

And Rossignol told him. In the orderly, precise way, which gets to be second nature with the trained police mind, he related the events of the preceding night, and Mr. Guelpa listened quietly, now and then making a note on a little sheet of paper. He was as amiable as ever and his calm unbroken; and yet the death of Jandel, before he had spoken, before he had confessed or betrayed, was the most serious defeat he had faced. Everything had told him that Jandel was the keystone of the crime. He had never looked upon Heldon as being anything more than the puppet and tool of this man who owned the car in which the Comte de Granlieu had gone to his death. Viola? She was something more than a puppet. Was it she who had silenced Jandel forever? Well, his witness was dead. He had not spoken, and now he could not speak.

"Pick up your hat, Rossignol—a sensible man respects what he puts on his head and does not throw it about like that," Mr. Guelpa said reproachfully. "Good! And now come on!"

"To the Tower?"

"Yes."

"The *patron?*"

"Yes; I should like to see the chief. When is there to be an autopsy on Jandel's body?"

"At once, I think. I know that Mr. Meunier was summoned, and Dr. Cray has probably made his examination of the body by this time."

Mr. Guelpa and Rossignol had gone out together, and together they walked across the bridge toward the Pointed Tower.

"I shall want that report as soon as possible," Mr. Guelpa was saying, "and in the mean time I should like very much to see what the *Sûreté* has on Jandel. On a man like that there must be a good many reports in the files. A man like that," he added, "must have been under the eyes of the police of a good many nations."

"If he has a *dossier*, it will only take a few minutes to turn it up," said Rossignol.

IT TOOK, indeed, only a few minutes to get Jandel's record at the *Sûreté*, but it amounted to very little.

"Drawn a blank," was Mr. Guelpa's comment when he was shown the small sheet of paper on which was all the police had ascertained regarding the life of this inconspicuous alien. This report was from the brigade which, in Paris, is more especially concerned with the surveillance of foreigners and which is delegated to watch the hotels and lodging-houses of the great city.

Of Jandel there was only one report, and it was already several years old. It recorded the fact that he had arrived from Vienna on a certain date, had stopped at a certain hotel, was thirty-six years of age, unmarried, and had described himself as a merchant—all of which did not lead very far, and there was a shade of annoyance on Mr. Guelpa's face as he greeted the chief of the *Sûreté*. Mr. Vadecard himself wore a ruffled look. In his vehement way he came at once to the point.

"This is the devil," he said, "and I do not know who to blame for it—except myself."

"Try blaming me," Mr. Guelpa suggested; "but what does that part of it matter? What is really bad is that the man is dead."

"I'm not sentimental," the chief remarked, "but I deeply deplore the death of that scoundrel."

"It was premature," Mr. Guelpa admitted.

"And the escape of the woman."

"Oh, that is nothing! It will be easy to put that right. When do you expect Dr. Cray's report?"

"Any moment now. He has probably made his examination by this time—the magistrates are there and some of my men. But I fear Cray's report can't help us much. It's the devil! You know my theory, Mr. Guelpa? That scoundrel was the chief accomplice—the chief agent of the crime. He was the brain. Heldon, probably, was the hand. And who inspired it—paid these greedy scoundrels to commit murder? *Cherchez la femme.* Ah, I know you do not agree with me. But if this dog Jandel were not dead, I would have made him confess it—with open mouth and hands up."

"He may talk yet," Mr. Guelpa said soothingly.

"Talk!" the chief shouted. "The man is dead."

"I have known dead men who had a great deal to say for themselves," Mr. Guelpa observed, "and there is one thing about it, Chief—when a dead man speaks, he always tells the truth."

The chief laughed.

"You may be right," he said; "but I doubt if a crook can stop lying even when he's dead."

He rang the bell on his desk.

"Is Guérin back?" he asked the man who opened the door.

"Yes, sir; and Dr. Cray wishes to see you."

"Bring him in," the chief ordered, and, turning to Mr. Guelpa, he added: "Cray, himself—eh? Perhaps, after all, your dead man has been loquacious."

Dr. Cray was a red-faced, pompous man of about sixty, with close-trimmed white beard and the air of self importance it is so difficult for the professional man not to acquire with the years. He laid down his hat, laid down his gloves, laid down his umbrella with professional dignity; in the same way he shook hands with the chief and Mr. Guelpa and sat down.

"Rather peculiar case," he said. He leaned back in the chair, his little black medical bag on his knees.

"Well!" the chief exclaimed impatiently. "How was the man killed?"

Dr. Cray opened his little bag and took from it a small paper package. He unwrapped the outer cover and slowly unfolded a square sheet of tissue-paper which he spread out on the table. In the center of the crumpled paper lay a bullet.

"I took this out of his neck," he said pompously and, picking up the bullet between his thumb and forefinger, he held it up in the light.

"Shot!" the chief cried.

Mr. Guelpa straightened up and his eyes brightened; he stroked his dyed mustache caressingly and smiled to himself, but he did not speak.

"Then that woman killed him when she made a bolt for it," the chief went on, getting up and pacing the room.

"No, no," Dr. Cray explained, with great dignity; "I said 'shot'—I did not say 'killed.' The man was not killed. He died a perfectly natural death—that is, in so far as any kind of premature death can be said to be natural. The bullet was in the superficial muscles of the neck."

"It had been there for some time?" Mr. Guelpa asked.

"Yes, probably. The wound had been carelessly treated. The man was in bad physical condition, anyway, and doubtless the wound had also weakened him. But he died of heart-failure."

The chief stood looking from Dr. Cray to Mr. Guelpa and back again.

"What do you make of it?"

Mr. Guelpa stood up and reached for his hat.

"It is as I thought, Chief," he said. "Jandel dead is more communicative than Jandel living."

"You're not going, Mr. Guelpa? No? What are you driving at?"

"You have here the revolver found by the count's dead body, have you not?"

"Yes; by chance I had it brought back for a further examination."

"Good! Let us have a look at it once more."

"Certainly," the chief replied. He took the revolver from a locker and held it in his hand. Together they examined it.

"One shot only was fired from that revolver. Is it not true?" said Mr. Guelpa.

"Yes," replied the chief. "One shot was fired, and only one."

"Quite right," Mr. Guelpa assented. "And the bullet which was fired is—of course we see it now—the bullet which Dr. Cray is holding up for our inspection is——"

WITH a pleasant little nod, Mr. Guelpa went toward the door. With his hand on the knob he paused, as if waiting a question. It came sharply enough in Mr. Vadecard's boisterous voice.

"Once more, what the devil does it mean?"

"It means," replied Mr. Guelpa slowly, "that the Comte de Granlieu was not shot with that revolver, *but that Jandel was!*"

"Jandel!"

"Of course! And here we have the missing bullet."

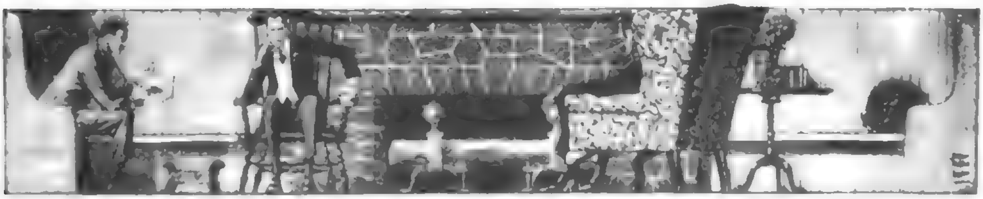
The chief was clearly mystified.

"Then Jandel did not shoot the count?" he exclaimed.

"No; it was the count who shot Jandel."

Mr. Guelpa was right. The dead had spoken.

How did Mr. Guelpa reach his daring conclusion? The de Granlieu mystery takes many surprising turns before it is finally solved in January EVERYBODY'S—out December 15th.



Everybody's Chimney Corner

Where Reader, Author and Editor
Gather to Talk Things Over

"I CAN think of many things that I haven't done, only a few that I have done," says Edison Marshall ("Landy the Little," page 73), in reply to a request to write something about himself.

I have never seen Broadway or the White Lights, Coney Island or the Woolworth Building; and I have thought about them so long that they have begun to partake of a legendary character. Moreover, I don't know that I dast go to New York. When I go to Seattle, which is sort of lively even if it hasn't got four million, I nearly get run over by trucks and street-cars. I get in an occupied compartment when I try to go through a revolving door. I get hollered at by policemen and scorned and frightened half to death by haughty waiters. I lost my hat and put my foot through a bass drum at a cabaret. I tip more than I should because I'm scared not to, and once, on the way to a hunting-trip in Alaska, I got tired of looking for signs and stopped in the first place I came to to inquire where was the largest sporting-goods store in the city. Whereupon a young clerk looked me over and said, in great contempt, "Young man, you're in it."

But aside from meeting the publishers, there is one great reason why I should like very much to have the courage to go to New York. I want to visit the zoo.

There are many other things I haven't done, and the things that I have done are not particularly important. I've been among wild life a good deal, traveled in some strange regions and got in some few, strange, fancy little messes. I love to write, and would keep on writing whether anybody paid me or not. I sold my first short story nine years ago, at the age of nineteen. By the time this gets into print, I shall have brought out five outdoor novels, one novel under a pen-name, and a volume of short stories. So you can see I have taken writing pretty seriously. I have a few things I am very proud of: my pioneer stock—humble men, but corking fighters, with Scriptural first names—and the work they and other pioneers did, that of building a great nation in a few generations; and when I go to England I shall brag like everything, much to Mr. Sinclair Lewis's disgust. I am proud of the West, a grizzly skin, several other things and people, and I work like a slave at my books, so that I may be ultimately proud of them. Maybe I can sum up my advantages in this fashion: Shoot fair, fish fair, swim poor, golf don't, tennis don't, billiards can't, and bridge won't.

THERE is no better known novelist than Robert W. Chambers, and there are few young writers so promising as Robert Husted Chambers, a son of Robert W. His story, "Captain Sebastien," begins on page 16. To the "Chimney Corner" circle he introduces himself thus:

I am twenty-two years old. Born at Broadalbin, New York, 1899. Educated at Harvard, which I entered in 1917, leaving it in the spring of 1918 for the Plattsburg Training Camp, and returning the following year to continue my course. I began working while still at Harvard under the auspices of Prof. Charles Townsend Copeland, known more commonly as "Cope," and respected alike by either title. I owe much to him and to our talks in the small square room in Hollis Hall where he holds court. My own tastes and recreations run toward the out-of-doors. I ride, shoot and fish. My hobbies are dogs, horses and firearms. I know a little of ships and the sea, and have always been attracted by the water-front, haunting the docks to listen to the old captains and "shellbacks" spin their yarns. Next to that, and to the tales of guides and hunters about a camp-fire, I enjoy Alexandre Dumas and his "Three Musketeers." I hope this is what you wanted.

WYNDHAM MARTYN, author of "Life, Liberty and—" (page 119), when asked to tell some of the interesting incidents of his career, replied:

I have walked over every big mountain range in Europe and also back from Arizona's Mexican frontier to New York. I was shot at and stabbed in this last Odyssey, but it was all in the day's work. Just now I am watching with anxious eyes the advance

Dana Burnet, author of "Street's End" (page 5), has other occupations besides story-writing.

of the organized minority which is determined to do us out of tobacco.

This week, one of my daughters in high school here, came back to tell me about a lecturer, a missionary lady lately from Shanghai, who had talked to them of the evils of tobacco. She had made innumerable erroneous statements such as: "No smoker can be a gentleman." (Wow!) "No great smoker can be a great man. Edison does not smoke." I happen to know the old man smokes cigars of such a fearsome nature as to defy analysis. Why, I ask you, should high-school students be allowed to waste their time listening to this doctrinaire nonsense?

MR. MARTYN lived for some years in New England and amused himself, as he expresses it, by finding out some of those old laws framed to take the joy out of the seventeenth-century life.

The Massachusetts General Assembly seemed to take fiendish delight in legislating against tobacco, just as the reformers are doing now. In 1646, a law was passed decreeing that one might smoke only when going on a journey at least five miles from any town. Naturally, an era of pedestrianism came.

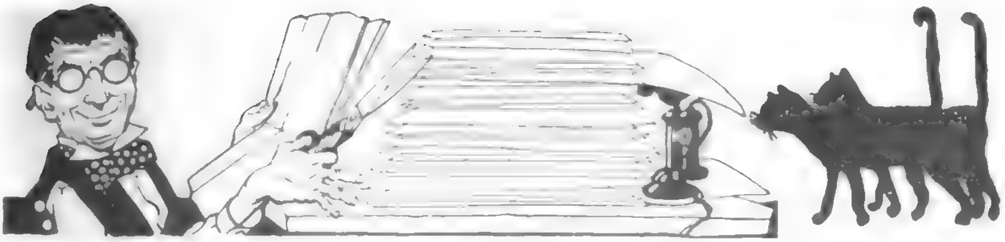
Connecticut, a year later, decreed that no person under twenty years of age or any other person unaccustomed to the use of the weed should smoke unless he had a physician's certificate and a license from the court.

But all this legislation availed nothing at that time, because the Puritan and Pilgrim were strongly individualistic. But to-day, if it comes, it will be different. The organized minority is on the warpath, and smokers must watch. Do you remember what we thought would happen to prohibition when we discussed it before the war? We loudly said that it was impossible. So, to-day, smokers say of tobacco prohibition. Be warned! They have started their work by wasting high-school children's time here in southern California, and if they take the humane comforts of the weed from us with a campaign of lying and fact-distortion, it will not sweeten life or make existence more bearable. Surely EVERYBODY'S readers ought to have something to say.

Being a purely fiction magazine, it would not be becoming of us to agree or disagree with Mr. Martyn, but the "Chimney Corner" will be glad to record the opinions of any who agree or disagree with him.

SEWELL HAGGARD.

Wyndham Martyn, author of "Life, Liberty and—" (page 119), and his friend, Mr. Isaacs, an Airedale of distinction.



Prose *and* Worse, *by* Gridley Adams

(Hartford Times)

A woman's hat can always be restored to its original grace and style by a little cleaning and reblocking, because it seldom receives sufficient hard wear to completely demolish it.

Well, just try to tell *your* wife that!

(White Plains, N. Y., Daily Reporter)

For Sale—Seven cows and Jersey bull; fresh and coming in. J. Cestone, Lincoln Avenue and Tarrytown Road. (F. M. G.)

Thanks for the tip; but I'm going right out.

(Hammond, Ind., Lake County News)

Mrs. Clarice McCoy, *née* Kerner, died at her home at 142 Grover Street, Hammond, yesterday noon, following an illness of several weeks. Death is attributed to heart-trouble brought on by six brothers and sisters.

Thank goodness, we can *choose* our friends!

(Albany, N. Y., Times-Union)

High St., 57—Near Madison Ave.; a beautifully furnished bay-window room, with twin beds, suitable for two. (S. B. W.)

Wasteful, and unnecessary.

(Lexington, Ill., Unit-Journal)

Miss Leona Gallehugh has returned to her duties at the telephone office after an illness of two weeks on account of sickness.

I'll bet a quarter it was because she wasn't feeling well.

(Atchison, Kan., Globe)

Roup has broken out among Atchison chickens.

Chicken dinner at Union hotel to-morrow, 50 cents.

The new lunch at the old Eglinger stand. Chicken dinner, 50 cents.

Roup? Yes; the "u" is silent as in Rastus.

(Neillsville, Wis., Press)

Strayed—A small red sow from the Grunt place at Columbia last week.

Well, we'll just have to change the name.

(Cleveland Press)

Thieves stole a whole orchard of 150 trees from a farmer near Hamilton.

George, when you put out the cat and the milk-bottle, I think you'd better bring in the orchard for the night.

(Baltimore American)

Girl or middle-aged woman wanted to sew buttons on men's vests.

Object matrimony?

(Marquette Co., Mich., Epitome)

The Valentine social at Campbell's Hall, given Friday evening by the Woman's Association, was well attended. The committee had arranged a very entertaining program consisting of games and contests. Mrs. Hollerup rendered a solo.

And the whole evening was utterly ruined.

(Chicago Tribune)

Wanted—To Rent—Bachelor; quiet neigh.; $20 mo. Address O., 122.

Line forms on the right.

(From a speech in the U. S. Senate)

A time has arrived when we must speak plainly.

Those who feel they must go out will please leave as quietly as possible.

(On Pratt Street, Hartford, Conn.)

Ivy Corsets

Or, as John Milton once penned, "As the trunk is bent, so is the stay inclined."

Copyright, 1922, by Gridley Adams

(San Francisco Chronicle)

MAN ACCUSED OF
STEALING FLEES
FROM POLICEMAN

Stingy!

(Los Angeles Daily Times)

PERSONAL—Party going to Chicago wishes to save money. Address Box 15, *Times* Office, Pasadena. (H. S.)

Then stay away; I've lived there.

(Sutton, W. Va., Braxton Central)

Born to Henry Wilmouth and wife, of Marpleton, a daughter, the 16th. (C. F. H.)

Bymeby they'll have a *real* family.

(Fashion Notes in Hartford Times)

The long cats are quite likely to have wider skirts, and some are distinctly circular.

As one woman to another.

(Adv. in Literary Digest)

Some men have worn nothing but Nettleton's shoes for upwards of twenty-five years. (T. W. L.)

Where are the police?

(Wautoma, Iowa, Sentinel)

Tom McRae is at Wautoma Cemetery for medical treatment.

Beating the doc to it.

(A valve-handle wheeze I rec'd)

I do not remember asking you anything about the envelopes which we will use for mailing the second proofs. What caption will it have on the outside? I am assuming, of course, that it will be different from the first one. Yours, R. C. S.

P. S. Yours this morning answers this.

Now, what should I have answered?

(Little Rock, Ark., Democrat)

The music suddenly ceased and there was a rush for the door. The male guests and members of the bridal party, without bothering to secure their hats, made a dash toward the scene of the fire, followed by a hysterical troup of women daintily gowned and slippered. It was a strange spectacle as the formally garbed guests trailed through the streets, bent on reaching the fire.

Bride and groom left at midnight for Memphis. The loss has not yet been determined.

Time will tell.

(Cincinnati Times-Star)

MARRIAGE LICENSES:

John Becker, 26, butcher, and Anna Wiener, 22, at home, 1707 Race street. (MRS. A. J. L.)

Cheer up—the wust is yet to come!

(Boston American)

OPPORTUNITY—For a live meat-cutter, etc. (P. S. G.)

Go to Sing Sing and take your pick.

(Chicago Daily News)

He would grind his teeth and glare up at them. (M. L. D.)

Probably in a glass of water on the shelf.

(Essex County Republican)

Hospitals at Saranac Lake of the boarding-house type are to be investigated by a corpse of tubercular specialists, and it is possible that some of the fifteen hospitals will be ordered closed. (S. C. P.)

That ghost to show what may happen.

(Heading of a newspaper article)

WHY DOES A DOG TURN AROUND BEFORE HE LIES DOWN?

Either so he will sleep like a top, or because he can't do it after he lies down, or 'cause he's the original loop-hound. Or yet, perhaps, it is for the same reason that a person shakes his head sideways for "No" and up and down for "Yes"—whatever that reason is.

(Elkins, W. Va., Intermountain)

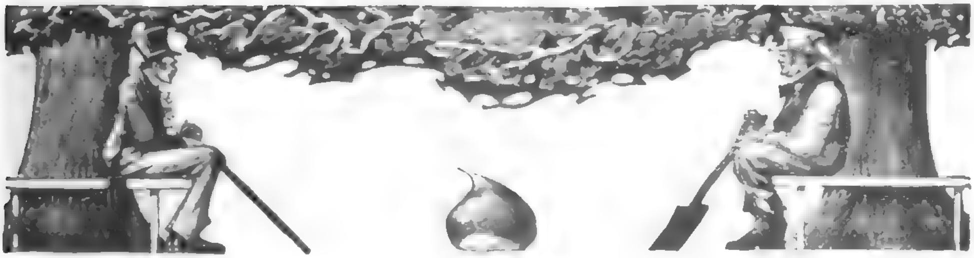
WHEELING, W. VA.—David E. Jones, former mayor of McMechen, a suburb of this city, died at Holloway, to-day, according to word received here. He was a railroader and met with an accident several days ago resulting in both legs being amputated and his back broken. Death resulted from cancer. (C. E. F.)

Practically ruined.

(Delavan, Ill., Times)

The program, following, was a masterpiece. The songs, duets and readings were excellently rendered and very appropriate. The toastmaster, Will Hullinger, deserves praise for his wisdom in execution. One hundred and seventy tickets were issued for the banquet and nearly all responded, and at 7:30 P. M. sat down to as fine a spread as an angel could wish for.

Such as, for instance, deviled ham, deviled eggs, cherrybim pie, etc.



Everybody's Chestnut Tree

EDITOR'S NOTE: Though the sign is the Chestnut Tree, no story is barred by its youth. We will gladly pay for available ones. Address all manuscripts to "The Chestnut Tree," enclosing stamped addressed envelope.

A CITY man, driving his automobile along a little used country road, heard something rattle beneath his car, stopped, looked back and saw a bright metal object lying in the road a short distance behind. It was a plow-point, evidently lost by some farmer.

It was fully half an hour before the next car came along, and its occupant, seeing the first man flat on his back under his vehicle by the roadside, stopped and asked what the trouble was.

The city man emerged and held up the plow-point.

"This blooming thing dropped off my car," he said, "and I've been hunting for half an hour to find out where it belongs."

MADAME DE GENLIS, a French writer of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, wielded a witty and sarcastic pen, but nevertheless was a woman of very correct principles, and carried out—or, rather, symbolized—her ideas of propriety to an extent that she kept books by male authors in one part of her library and those by female authors in another. Once two gentlemen called upon her, and, while waiting for her to appear, one of them, reminded by the sight of the separated bookshelves, explained the amusing eccentricity to his companion.

"I suppose," the latter remarked dryly, "she does not want to add to her library."

DOCTOR: Madam, I shall have to paint your husband's throat with nitrate of silver.

WIFE: Use nitrate of gold, Doctor; the expense is immaterial.

A FRIVOLOUS young English girl, with no love for the Stars and Stripes, exclaimed:

"Oh, what a silly-looking thing the American flag is! It suggests nothing but a stick of peppermint candy."

"Yes," replied a bystander; "the kind of candy that has made everybody sick who ever tried to lick it."

THE car was already well filled when a very stout but affable gentleman pushed in and sat down, or rather squeezed in part of his ample proportions, falling on a very thin and rather sour-looking man on his right.

The latter glared at him.

"They ought to charge by weight in these cars," he growled.

"In which case," was the genial response, "it wouldn't be worth while stopping to pick you up."

A YOUNG lady whose knowledge of baseball was not large sat watching a game which was proving very disastrous to the home team. Finally she turned to her escort and exclaimed:

"Isn't our pitcher grand? He hits their bats no matter where they hold them."

IT WAS a hot day on the border. The regiment had been ordered to move, and for more than an hour a soldier had tried to get his mule into a box car. The chaplain came along and began to laugh at the soldier's discomfiture. The poor soldier turned as he wiped his perspiring brow and said,

"Chaplain, how did Noah ever get two of these things into the Ark?"

SOME time ago a young man went to a great store in Chicago to apply for a position, and was fortunate enough to be shown into the office of the merchant prince himself, to whom he stated the object of his call.

The merchant was favorably impressed with his appearance and address, and after asking him a few questions relative to his business experience, promised him a place in his employ. But the caller, who evidently had expected to be more rigorously catechized, thought it best to volunteer additional information.

"If you wish," he began, "to know something of my antecedents——"

"I don't care to know anything about your antecedents, young man," interrupted the merchant, with a smile. "If your subsequents are all right, you'll do. You may report to Mr. Smith next Monday."

TWO young employees of a florist were recently startled by the appearance of the proprietor while they were engaged with a game of checkers in the back of the shop. Justly indignant, the proprietor roared,

"How is it that I hardly ever find you fellows at work when I come back here?"

"I know," volunteered one. "It's on account of those rubber heels you wear."

"**YES**, indeed," said De Boast; "my hearing is extraordinarily acute."

"You don't say!" put in Von Broke. "Can you hear my watch ticking from where you stand?"

"Easily."

"Well, you are a wonder! It's at the pawnbroker's, ten blocks away."

CLIENT (*to rising young lawyer who has just won his first case*): You won the case all right, but I'm a ruined man in this town.

LAWYER: How's that?

CLIENT: You made me out so dog-gone poor I can't ever get trusted for a cent.

"**WHERE'S** your office-boy, Dave?"

"Fired him Saturday—never did anything but stand around, looking wise."

"Well, he won't be in your way any more, I reckon, now you're rid of him."

"Don't be so sure about that. He may turn up here some day as an efficiency expert."

DOWN in Mississippi, in a little plantation town, times were very hard. The cotton crop had failed and nearly every one was greatly in need of ready cash. Not long ago, the owner of one of the plantations in the vicinity was called to his back door to find there a young negro named Jim, one of the tenants on the place.

"Cun'l Bob," said Jim, "de nex' time you go to town, Ah wisht you'd git me a marriage license. Ah wants to marry Liza."

Colonel Bob promised to do so, but told Jim that it would cost him two dollars, which, after search through his pockets, Jim managed to produce.

A few days later, Jim's license was sent to him, and nothing more was heard of the matter for about two weeks, when Colonel Bob was again called to the door to see Jim.

"Cun'l Bob," said Jim, "Ah's decided Ah don't want to marry Liza. Ah wants to marry Begonia instid. Can't you scratch out Liza's name on de license an' write in Begonia's?"

Colonel Bob informed Jim that this could not be done, and that if he wanted to marry Begonia, he would have to secure a new license at a cost of another two dollars. Jim appeared much crestfallen, and went away shaking his head. Some time after this, while riding through his fields, Colonel Bob chanced to come upon Jim.

"Jim," said the colonel, "are you married yet?"

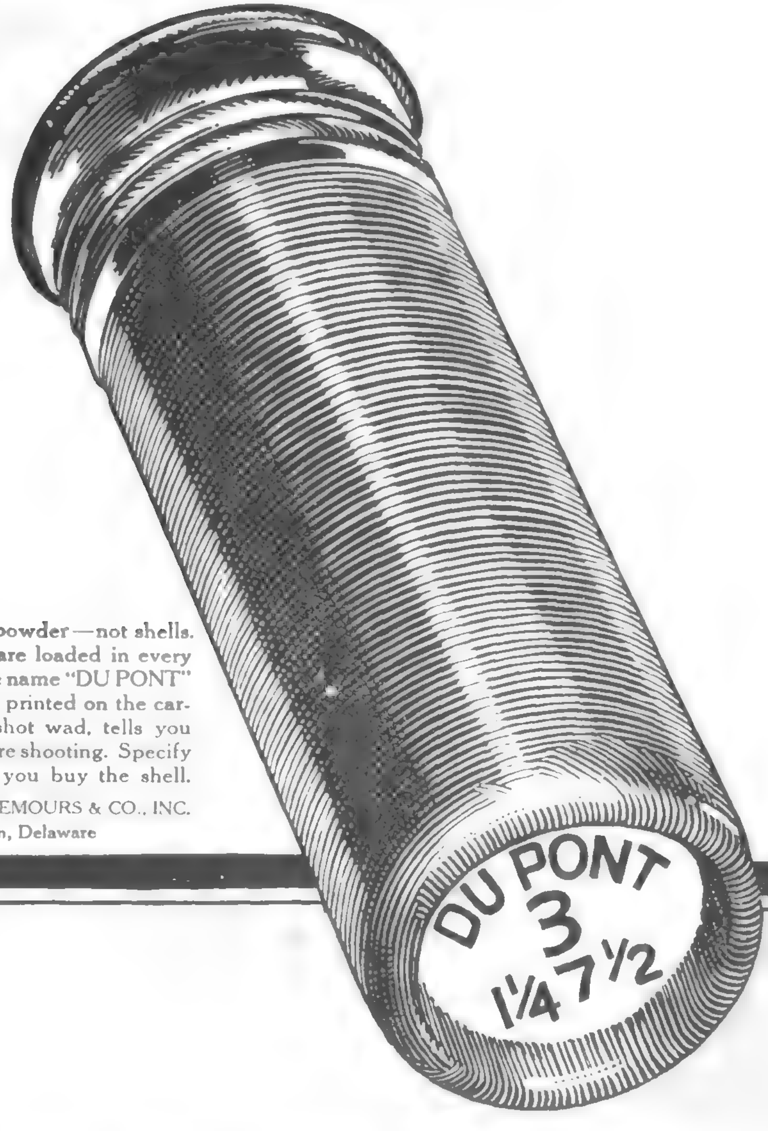
"Yassuh, Cun'l Bob," Jim replied; "me and Liza got married las' night. Ah'd a heap ruther have married Begonia, and Ah thought about it a mighty long time, but, Cun'l Bob, Ah'll tell you de truf—Ah jes' couldn't see no two dollars difference in dem two niggers."

BOBBY, aged four, was playing with his kitten before the fireplace when it began to purr contentedly.

The boy's mother was surprised presently to see her son grasp his pet by the tail and drag it across the carpet to the accompaniment of agonized protests from the unfortunate animal.

"Bobby," she cried reproachfully, "you must not hurt your kitty!"

"I've got to get him away from this fire," replied Bobby excitedly. "He was beginning to boil!"



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Or Do You Only Think You Do?

What you say
tells what you are

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Correct English Is the Password of Culture

Correct speech and accurate pronunciation are essential to progress in business and in society. Your ease among educated people depends upon your confidence in your own speech. You may tactfully conceal your ignorance in other subjects, but every time you utter a word, your education and refinement are judged by the kind of English you speak.

Do You Say—

—in'kwirry for *inqui'ry;* ad'dress for *address';* press'idence for *prece'dence;* cu'pon for *cou'pon;* al'lies for *allies';* epitome for *epit'ome;* ac'climated for *accli'mated;* progrum for *program;* ali'as for *a'lias;* grimmy for *gri'my;* compar'able for *com'parable;* conver'sant for *con'versant*, etc.?

How Do You Pronounce Such Simple Words as—

—aviator, trough, grimace, pantomime, percolator, library, condolence, Tuesday, February, vagary, length, exquisite, interesting, lorgnette, hospitable, maniacal, terpsichorean, nasturtium, gladiolus, xylophone, etc.?

Do You Know When to Use—

—laying or lying, sits or sets, dived or dove, drank or drunk, swam or swum, aggravate or irritate, got or gotten, lunch or luncheon, who or whom, admittance or admission, council, counsel or consul, practical or practicable, vocation or avocation, affect or effect, shall or will, etc.?

Can You Pronounce Common Foreign Words Like—

—fiancé (e), 'cello, lingerie, décolleté, bourgeois, ragoût, élite, Reichstag, Bolsheviki, Sinn Fein, Galli-Curci, Puccini, Velasquez, Les Misérables, Thaïs, Lucia, Paderewski, Nazimova, Dvorak, faux pas, carte blanche, etc.?

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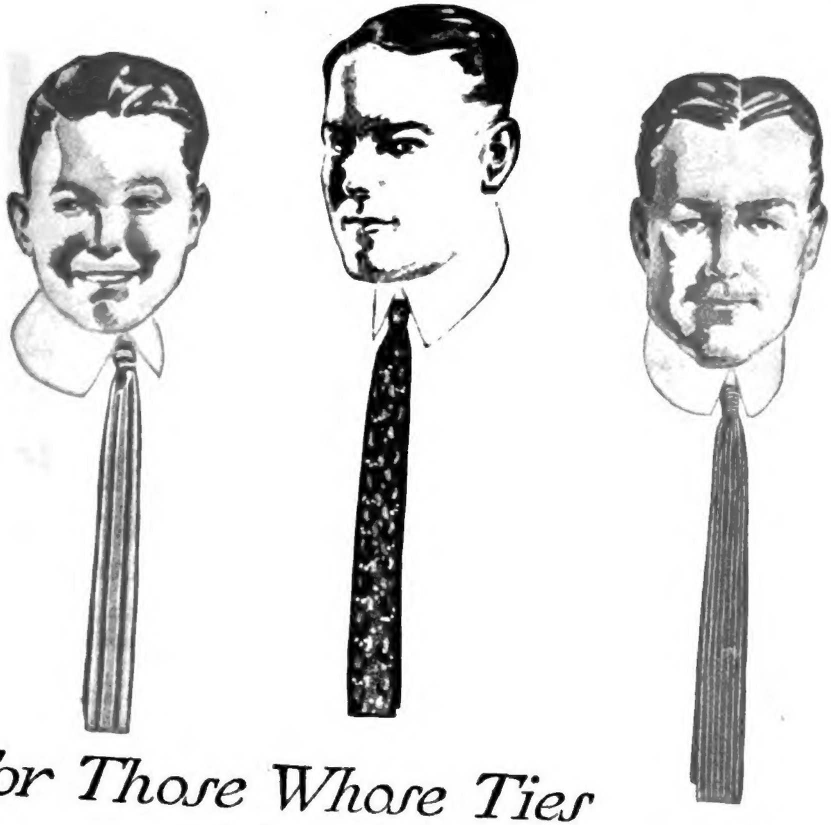

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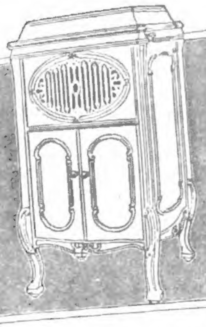

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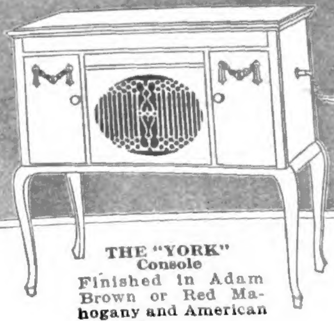
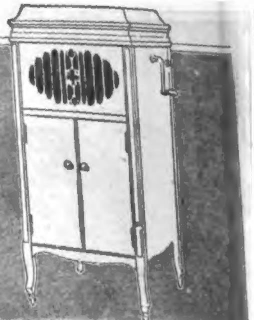
Finished in American Walnut, Adam Brown or Red Mahogany. Gold plated trimmings.
Height—49 in.



THE "YORK"
Console
Finished in Adam Brown or Red Mahogany and American Walnut.
Height—33½ in.



MODEL "210"—Cabinet
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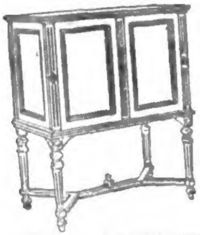

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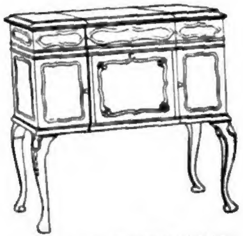

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Height—41 in.

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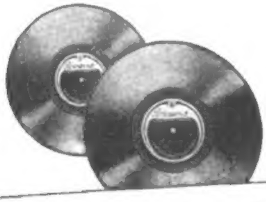

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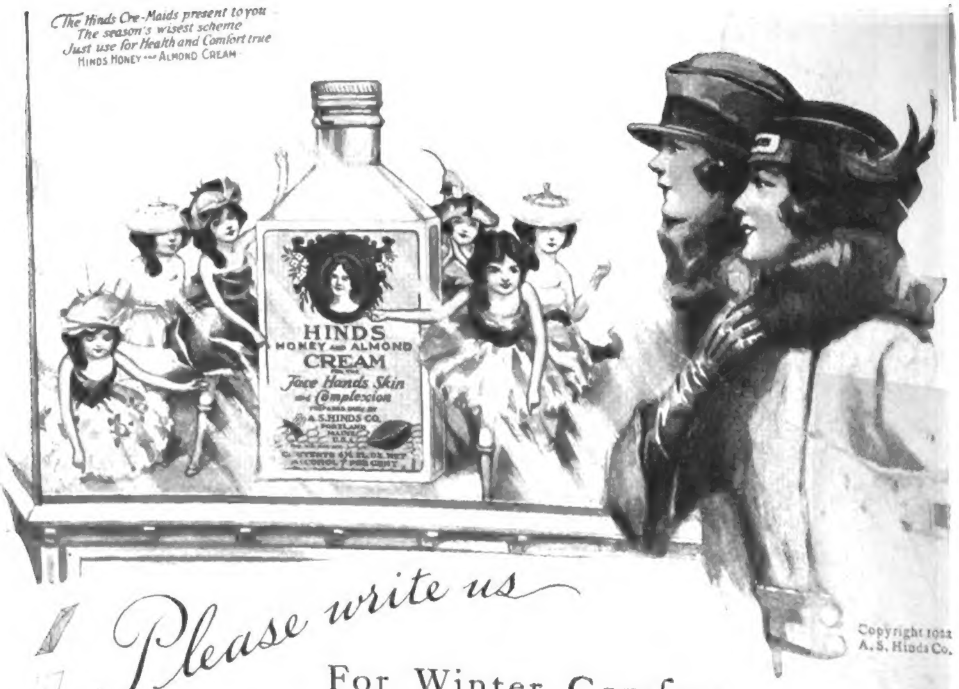
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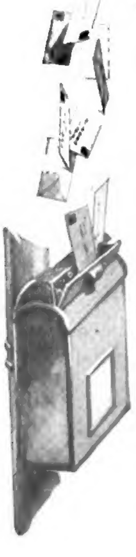

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If you'll just try this wonderful cream for some of the purposes described we are very sure you will soon give it preference, because that is what so many other nice looking ladies have been doing all these years past.

It is the purity and refinement and gratifying effect of Hinds Honey and Almond Cream that have gained for it such a remarkable nation-wide and world-wide patronage. It is good for everybody in your home,—grown-ups and kiddies. Father and brother like it after shaving and to keep their hands smooth and good looking. It prevents as well as heals the chapping.

HINDS WEEK-END BOX

makes a very useful gift and costs only 50c. postpaid, or at your dealer's. It contains those essentials for the comfort and attractiveness of the face and hands. Trial size, Hinds Honey and Almond Cream, Cold and Disappearing Cream, Soap, Talc and Face Powder.

As you hike along the windy street
Facing the blast of icy sleet
Chapped faces, hands and ankles too
And windburned skin may trouble you.
Then pause a bit upon your way
And take the Cre-Maids' tip today,
Just use Hinds Honey and Almond Cream
And meet the weather with joy supreme.
Frostbites, chilblains and kindred ills
Hinds quickly comforts, heals and stills.
Chapping and windburn pass away,
Soft lovely skin just comes to stay.
When the winds are raw and the cold extreme
You need Hinds Honey and Almond Cream.

WONDERFUL BASE FOR FACE POWDER. Hinds Honey and Almond Cream is now used for this purpose with marvelous success. Moisten the skin slightly with the cream, let it nearly dry, then dust on the powder. It will adhere to perfection.

AS A MANICURING AID THIS CREAM softens the cuticle, prevents soreness and preserves the lustre of the nails.

All druggists and department stores sell Hinds Honey and Almond Cream. We will mail you a small sample for 2c or trial bottle for 6c. Ask your dealer for Hinds Superior Toilet Requisites, but if not obtainable, order of us. We send postpaid in the United States.

A.S. HINDS CO., Dept. 50, Portland, Maine